INDIA

WITHOUT FABLE

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A 1942 SURVEY

by

KATE L. MITCHELL



[1942]

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INDIA

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PROLOGUE



UNTIL very recently, the word India conjured up in the mind of the average American the vague but exciting image of a fabulous country, a land of mystery and romantic charm. India was the country of Yogis, snake charmers and the rope trick; of jewel-bedecked Maharajas and the Taj Mahal; of British *Pukka Sahibs* from the pages of Kipling; of the Khyber Pass and the Bengal Lancers; and of that odd little man Gandhi and his loin cloth. India was a land of teeming millions, of bewildering religions and the caste system. It was remote, picturesque, and of no immediate concern to anyone except the British.

Even after the war of 1914-18, during which India contributed generously in troops, money, and supplies to the Allies, she was not regarded as an important factor in world politics. Like the rest of Asia, India was left outside the scope of post-war political reconstruction. President Wilson's 14 points, and all the other programs for national self-determination and more democratic forms of government, did not extend to the colonial world in Africa and Asia, although they inevitably served to stimulate the growth of nationalist aspirations among the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, particularly in China and India. The war of 1914-18 was not,

in fact, a "world war" in the true sense of the word, for the colonial countries figured in it only as sources of manpower and raw materials, not as battlegrounds, and the political attitude of the native population was of no great importance to their western rulers.

The India of 1914 was very different from the India of today. At that time, India's leaders were unanimous in their support of Britain's war effort, their hope being that loyal cooperation would win them important concessions from the British Government. The Indian "nationalist" movement was still confined almost entirely to the western-educated business and professional groups whose major aims were a greater degree of self-government for India within the British Empire and more representation for Indians in the governmental bureaucracy. Indian nationalism was essentially a movement of Indian propertied interests and intellectuals with a "moderate" political outlook, and had little or no contact with the backward illiterate masses of the Indian people.

The twenty-year period between the first and second world wars, however, witnessed a far-reaching transformation of the Indian nationalist movement, marked by the political awakening of millions of the Indian people, the rise of trade unions and peasant organizations, and the development of the Indian National Congress into a strong political party with a large mass following, pledged to work for the complete independence of India from British rule. Under Congress leadership, millions of ignorant poverty-stricken peasants and workers were given new self-confidence, and were organized and encouraged to challenge the authority of the all-powerful British *Raj*. Indian nationalism was nc

longer the special perquisite of a small educated minority, bred in the traditions of British parliamentary procedure and content to follow the path of gradual constitutional reform toward the ultimate goal of self-government within the British Empire. It had become a dynamic, all-encompassing movement, including illiterates as well as intellectuals, militant trade unionists as well as conservative industrialists, impoverished peasants as well as wealthy landlords. The membership of the National Congress now included representatives of every religious community, and every shade of political opinion from conservatives to extreme radicals, bound together by their common opposition to British rule, although differing sharply in their economic and social philosophies.

To the outside world, the sharpening conflict between the Indian nationalist movement and the British Government has often appeared as a confused and incomprehensible turmoil. Although the Indian National Congress is by far the largest and most representative political body in India, and includes thousands of Moslems within its membership, Mr. M. A. Jinnah's Moslem League challenges the right of Congress to speak for the Indian people and proclaims itself the champion of Moslem "nationalism" against the rule of the "Hindu majority." Some forty million "Untouchables" who seemingly should form the backbone of any vital nationalist movement are led by Dr. Ambedkar who is bitterly opposed to the Congress. Gandhi, still the most popular and powerful mass leader in India, wants to banish the stigma of "untouchability" from the "depressed classes" but has steadfastly opposed any effort to alter the Hindu caste system; he wishes merely to make the "Untouchables" a new fifth

caste. On the other hand, the Hindu Mahasabha, the or
of extreme Hindu orthodoxy and reaction, works vig
ously to persuade the Congress leaders to follow a "co
munal" policy of rivalry among the various religions, a
attacks the Congress and Gandhi because they do not ope
pursue the aim of Hindu supremacy. The Mahasabha a
differs sharply from the Congress on the issue of non-v
lence, one of its aims being the revival of the ancient milit
glories of the Hindus.

Perhaps the most confusing phenomenon in the wh
maelstrom of Indian politics is Gandhi's effort to lead
impoverished people, desperately in need of modern ind
trial and agricultural techniques, backward along the pa
of economic retrogression to a primitive society based
handicraft industries and the renunciation of all forms
mechanization. Is it an accident that time and again the Br
ish authorities have found Gandhi of inestimable value
restraining the progressive forces of Indian nationalism, ev
while the world was thinking of him as the great eman
pator of his people? Then again, we find the seeming
baffling contradiction that Gandhi numbers among h
staunchest supporters some of the richest and most powe
ful of India's industrialists, and that meetings of the mo
radical Congress leaders frequently take place in the ma
nificent home of Birla, the great Calcutta industrialist ar
millionaire. What kind of man is Gandhi, and wherein li
his hold over the Indian people? What is the real meaning
"non-violent non-cooperation" and how can Gandhi co
template using such tactics against a Japanese invasion?
Gandhi's leadership on the rise or on the decline? Is Nehr
at heart a disciple of Gandhi, or is he an independent think

and statesman, strong enough to assert his own leadership and fight the policies which Gandhi seeks to impose upon the Indian nationalist movement?

But the multitude of conflicting forces within British India do not complete the list of Indian contradictions. On matters outside the borders of India, the Indian National Congress is now accused by some of being pro-Axis because of its refusal to cooperate with the British war effort. Yet long before the outbreak of the present war, when England and the United States were following a policy of appeasement toward fascist aggression, the Congress denounced that policy, condemned the invasions of Manchuria and Ethiopia, and supported Loyalist Spain. And during the early years of the Sino-Japanese war, when China was fighting single-handed with only the most limited assistance from the great democratic powers, the Indian National Congress, representing probably the poorest people in the world, sent numerous medical missions and supplies to China. Nehru's visit to Chungking in 1939 was the occasion for the largest official welcome ever accorded a foreigner.

To all this welter of political forces in India, we must add the amazing and anachronistic patchwork created by the existence of 562 Native States, or feudal principalities, scattered the length and breadth of the country and ruled over by autocratic Princes, some of whom are reputed to be among the wealthiest men in the world. The question may well be asked whether India can ever hope to become a free or united nation, so long as these feudal Princes rule over some 45% of her territory and hold 93,000,000 Indians in complete subjection.

Such are some of the bewildering factors in the Indian

political scene, and it is small wonder that so many fin
easy to agree with the British thesis that India must achi
some sort of internal unity before she can become an eligi
candidate for greater political freedom. But despite
seeming confusion and internal dissension, the one consist
trend visible in India's history for the past twenty-five ye
has been the steadfast, increasingly powerful drive for
tional independence. If we remove the confusing veils
propaganda and counter-propaganda, and study the act
historical facts, we can see a mammoth struggle on the p
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countries on an equal basis. Even the Cripps Mission co
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Cripps will be remembered as an unappreciated but blan
less laborer for the cause of Indian progress, or as one w
confused the basic issues and in reality added further to t
bitterness and complexity of the Indian political proble

The foregoing is sufficient to indicate that it is an incre
ingly awakened, turbulent, and dynamic India which fa
the most critical period in her history, and which, sim
taneously, has assumed a position of great political and st
tegic importance in the global war against the Axis. In
today is the focus of a gigantic pincer movement by t
armed forces of Nazi Germany and Japan. If the A
Powers should succeed in closing the pincers, they will ha
control over a wide territorial belt stretching from t
Pacific to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, so rich

basic raw materials, food, labor power, and strategic air and naval bases that the position of the United Nations would be highly critical, to say the least. Even if Japan alone were able to establish bases in India, she would be in a position to interfere seriously with Allied supply lines to the Soviet Union and the Near East, as well as to China and India. And, conversely, if England and the United States are to be effective in dealing decisive blows against Hitler on the European front, they urgently need the support of a fully mobilized India fighting in cooperation with China to hold Japan at bay in the Pacific.

India thus occupies a position of key importance for the war as a whole. What happens in India will largely determine not only India's own future, but the future of the whole Pacific. It will bear directly on the balance of forces in the Middle East, and the ability of the United Nations to strike effectively in Europe. Above all, India symbolizes the whole problem of mobilizing the colonial world in the war against the Axis. Thus far, the colonial peoples of Asia have not been given either the opportunity or the incentive to fight as equal partners in the war. The Atlantic Charter has not been followed by a Pacific or Asiatic charter. In fact, the Prime Minister of Great Britain has specifically stated that the provisions of the Atlantic Charter do not apply to India. The latest British proposals regarding India, submitted to India's leaders by Sir Stafford Cripps, marked in some respects a substantial advance over previous vague pledges regarding eventual self-government for India. But did they adequately meet the immediate and urgent need for mobilizing and arming the Indian people? Did they show any inclination to make India a genuine partner in the war against

political scene, and it is small wonder that so many find it easy to agree with the British thesis that India must achieve some sort of internal unity before she can become an eligible candidate for greater political freedom. But despite the seeming confusion and internal dissension, the one consistent trend visible in India's history for the past twenty-five years has been the steadfast, increasingly powerful drive for national independence. If we remove the confusing veils of propaganda and counter-propaganda, and study the actual historical facts, we can see a mammoth struggle on the part of nearly one-fifth of the human race to achieve social progress, political liberty, and a basis for cooperation with other countries on an equal basis. Even the Cripps Mission could not obliterate the strength, sincerity, and progressive character of the Indian people's fight for national freedom and for the basic civil rights enjoyed by the citizens of the western democracies. History will decide whether Sir Stafford Cripps will be remembered as an unappreciated but blameless laborer for the cause of Indian progress, or as one who confused the basic issues and in reality added further to the bitterness and complexity of the Indian political problem.

The foregoing is sufficient to indicate that it is an increasingly awakened, turbulent, and dynamic India which faces the most critical period in her history, and which, simultaneously, has assumed a position of great political and strategic importance in the global war against the Axis. India today is the focus of a gigantic pincer movement by the armed forces of Nazi Germany and Japan. If the Axis Powers should succeed in closing the pincers, they will have control over a wide territorial belt stretching from the Pacific to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, so rich in

basic raw materials, food, labor power, and strategic air and naval bases that the position of the United Nations would be highly critical, to say the least. Even if Japan alone were able to establish bases in India, she would be in a position to interfere seriously with Allied supply lines to the Soviet Union and the Near East, as well as to China and India. And, conversely, if England and the United States are to be effective in dealing decisive blows against Hitler on the European front, they urgently need the support of a fully mobilized India fighting in cooperation with China to hold Japan at bay in the Pacific.

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the Axis by giving Indian leaders a responsible share in the government and the defense of their own country?

To many Americans, the present Indian situation appears hopelessly confused, and the attitude of the Indian nationalist leaders inexcusably recalcitrant and defeatist. Unfamiliar with the history of India's political development under British rule, they cannot comprehend why any right-minded Indian should have rejected the British offer of full Dominion Status after the war. They are inclined to condemn the Indian National Congress as at best isolationist, and at worst, pro-Axis, and to accept the British thesis that the Congress alone is to blame for the failure of the Cripps Mission to secure wholehearted Indian cooperation in the war. The news reports of the Cripps Mission, and much of the editorial comment in the American press on the question of India, showed all too clearly the widespread ignorance which prevails in the United States concerning India's recent history, a matter which is no longer solely a British or an Indian problem but a world problem in which the American people have a direct and immediate concern. This study is an attempt to describe some of the more elemental forces at work in India today; not in the India of legend and fable, but in the more prosaic but far more important India of reality.

PART I

INDIA TODAY

CHAPTER I



A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MAP OF INDIA

INDIA is the home of nearly one-fifth of the human race. Her 389,000,000 people represent many racial strains, adhere to a number of conflicting religions, and speak a variety of languages and dialects. They are now struggling to achieve unity and social progress against the forces of aggression from without and disruption from within, and the outcome of this struggle will profoundly affect the future of all Asiatic peoples and their relations with the western world, to say nothing of its significance in the world-wide struggle against fascist aggression.

The setting of this great human drama is a land notable for the great diversity of its physical features and the wealth and variety of its natural resources. Physically, India is a country of extremes: of mighty mountain ranges and vast plains watered by some of the greatest rivers in Asia; of torrential rains and disastrous droughts; of dense jungles and barren deserts; of every variety of climate from the perma-

nent snows of the Himalayas to the torrid, low-lying swamps and delta regions of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts.

In the social, political, and economic fields, India also presents sharp contrasts. Here is a land where immense wealth in the hands of the few is accompanied by abject poverty and semi-starvation for millions; a land of eminent scholars, scientists, and philosophers, and a 93% illiteracy rate; a land where the mechanisms of a modern economic structure—railways, airlines, industrial plants, and large commercial centers—exist side by side with, or are superimposed on a backward agrarian economy of tiny peasant holdings; and where the vast majority of the population extract a painfully meager living from the soil by methods which have remained virtually unchanged for centuries.

Geographically, India falls into three main divisions: the mountainous regions of the north and northwest, which form the mighty barrier that divides India from the rest of Asia; the great plains of northern and central India, watered by the Ganges, the Indus, the Brahmaputra, and their tributaries; and southern or peninsular India, including the ancient Deccan plateau and the narrow Malabar and Coromandel coastal strips.

Turning from physical to man-made divisions, however, we find that India is carved up into a bewildering patchwork of political units and administrative anomalies, so that a traveler going from Bombay to Delhi must cross no less than 38 frontiers! This irrational situation arises from the existence of 562 autonomous Indian States or Principalities which are confusingly interlaced with the provinces of British India. Although they are theoretically autonomous in everything but foreign affairs and their people are not British subjects,

these States acknowledge the suzerainty of the British Crown. In practice, British control over these "anachronistic pools of absolutism" is effected through British Resident Advisers and Political Agents. The States range in size from Hyderabad's 82,700 square miles, with a population of nearly 15,000,000, down to tiny holdings not more than one or two miles in extent. Altogether, the States occupy 712,508 square miles or about 45% of the total area of India, and their rulers wield absolute power over 93,000,000 people.

British India is that part of India ruled directly by the British Government through the India Office in London and the Viceroy or Governor-General in New Delhi. In its 862,769 square miles, less than one-third the area of the United States, live 296,000,000 people. It is divided into eleven Governors' Provinces: Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, North-West Frontier Province, Orissa, Punjab, Sind, and the United Provinces; and five small Chief Commissioners' Provinces or Districts: Ajmer-Merwara, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, British Baluchistan, Coorg, and Delhi. The latter are governed by High Commissioners appointed by the Governor-General and are subject entirely to his control, while the former are ruled by Governors appointed by the British Crown, but enjoy a measure of self-government under the 1935 constitution.

If India is a patchwork as regards her political divisions, her population might best be described as a mosaic representing the fusion of many racial, religious, and linguistic segments. This "melting pot" character of Indian society—a characteristic which should arouse the sympathetic interest of all Americans—is the product of the series of invasions and con-

quests which marked Indian history from some 2,000 years B.C. until the arrival of the British in the eighteenth century. The Aryans, the Huns, the Turks, the Persians, the Mongols, and others swept down on India through the northern mountain passes, and added their blood, their religious beliefs, and their social customs to the complex pattern of Indian life.

The earliest invaders were the Aryans, light-skinned nomads and great warriors, who spread throughout northern and central India and displaced the dark-skinned Dravidians, traces of whose culture and language still endure in southern India. The Aryans developed the complex form of worship which became Hinduism, a religion which soon spread throughout the country, and which has continued to exercise a far-reaching influence on the social and economic life of India. Following the Aryans, the most important invasion prior to the British conquest was that of the Mongols (called Moguls in India) whose penetration of India began in the 14th century when Genghis Khan captured Lahore in the Punjab. Although the period of Mogul rule reached its height during the reigns of the great Babur, who became Emperor of Hindustan, and of his grandson Akbar (1556-1605), most of India was ruled by the Moguls from the 14th to the 18th centuries. The Moguls were Moslems, and the imprint of their rule can be found not only in such architectural marvels as the Taj Mahal and the Fort at Delhi, but also in the existence of a Moslem community now numbering about 88,000,000. The existence of this large Moslem minority, with a creed and social customs differing sharply from those of India's 256,000,000 Hindus, has furnished the raw materials for one of the most thorny and exploited issues of

modern India—the so-called "Communal Problem," or antagonism between different religious "communities,"—which has been used increasingly as a weapon in the most recent phase of India's political struggle.

Barriers to Indian Unity

In most western discussions of the "Indian problem," the main emphasis is laid on the diversity rather than the unity of the Indian people. India has been repeatedly pictured as a vast welter of races, religions, and languages, possessing only the unity imposed upon it by British rule and ready to fly into hostile and warring fragments if that rule should be weakened or removed. During the late 19th century, this view was bluntly proclaimed by authoritative British spokesmen such as Sir John Strachey, who declared in 1888 that "this is the first and most essential thing to learn about India—that there is not and never was an India possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social, or religious, no 'people of India' of which we hear so much." In a similar vein, Sir John Seeley wrote in 1883 that "India is not a political name, but only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. It does not mark the territory of a nation or a language, but the territory of many nations and many languages."

This same thesis is implicit throughout the "Survey Volume" of the famous Simon Report, which laid the basis for the new constitution granted India in 1935. Issued in 1930 as a scientific and objective presentation of the facts about the Indian problem, this Report is filled with refer-

ences to the "complication of language" with no less th "222 vernaculars," the "rigid complication of innumeral castes," the "variegated assemblage of races and creeds," a similar expressions which suggest the utter impossibility unity among the Indian people, and the consequent impc tance of British rule as the only means of preserving interr peace and order among the diverse elements composi Indian society.

Yet what would an American think if an English Comm sion visited us and made the following "impartial" report conditions in the United States: "The sub-continent of t United States is characterized by the great diversity climate and geographical features, while its inhabitants e hibit a similar diversity of race and religion. The customa talk of the United States as a single entity tends to obscur to the casual British observer, the variegated assemblage races and creeds which make up the whole. In the City New York alone there are to be found nearly a hundred di ferent nationalities, some of which are in such great numbe that New York is at once the largest Italian city, the large Jewish city, and the largest Negro city in the world. Th contiguity of such diverse elements has been a fruitful caus of the most bitter communal conflicts. In the Southern State especially, this has led to inter-racial riots and murders whic are only prevented from recurring by the presence of a external impartial power able to enforce law and order. Th notoriety of the rival gangs of Chicago . . . has diverted at tention from the not less pressing problems presented to th Paramount Power by the separate existence of the Mormon in Utah, the Finns in Minnesota, the Mexican immigratio up the Mississippi, and the Japanese on the West Coast; no

to speak of the survival in considerable numbers of the aboriginal inhabitants." [1]

The argument that the diversity of the Indian people automatically rules out any rapid progress toward full self-government for India is used so frequently and effectively that it may be well to focus this discussion of the Indian people on those points of division which are most strongly emphasized as justification for Britain's reluctance to relax her control over Indian political life. Among these are the multiplicity of languages; the Hindu caste system, which acts as a barrier to unity among the Hindus and between them and other sections of the population; and "communal conflict" among the various religious communities, especially Hindu-Moslem antagonism.

With regard to linguistic barriers, the famous "222 separate languages" which make such a frequent appearance in press despatches and speeches about India, first saw the light of day in the 1921 Census Report and were subsequently emphasized in the Report of the Simon Commission. This figure was reduced to 203 in the 1931 Census, and the separation of Burma from India in 1937 should have necessitated a further sharp reduction, since 128 of these "languages," many of which were very minor dialects, belonged to Burma. It may also be noted that when the British Government wished to make a case for the separation of Burma from India, the emphasis on the multiplicity of languages was replaced by insistence on the essential unity of language in

[1] This parody was written by an Englishman in 1930, to illustrate his objection to the spirit in which the Simon Commission approached the task of surveying conditions in India, and to the Report's one-sided emphasis on factors justifying the continued existence of an "external impartial power."

Burma. Thus the Simon Report declares that "though as many as 128 indigenous tongues are distinguished in the province [Burma], nearly seven-tenths of the whole population—and the proportion is growing—speak Burmese or a closely allied language."

Taking the official Census figures for India, exclusive of Burma, we therefore have 75 languages and dialects. In actual practice, however, the language problem of India is a problem of nine, or at most twelve main languages belonging to two broad groups: Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. Three-fourths of the people of India speak Indo-Aryan languages derived from a common source, Sanskrit, so that there is the same similarity among them as among the various Latin languages of Europe. The Indo-Aryan languages are, in fact, so closely allied that even the Census Report of 1921 acknowledged that "there is no doubt but that there is a common element in the main languages of Northern and Central India which renders their speakers without any conspicuous change in their speech mutually intelligible to one another, and this common basis already forms an approach to a *lingua franca* over a large part of India." The Indo-Aryan languages, however, have absolutely nothing in common with the Dravidian languages of southern India. The principal Indo-Aryan languages are Hindustani, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Gujerati, and Oriya. The principal Dravidian languages are Tamil, Telegu, and Kanarese. One confusing feature of Hindustani, which is spoken or understood by more than 100,000,000 Indians, is that it exists in two vocabularies and two scripts: Hindi and Urdu. Hindi is written in Sanskrit script and uses more Sanskrit words, while Urdu is written in Persian script and uses more Per-

sian and Arabian words. About 80% of the words, however, are the same in speech. Hindi is the Hindu branch and Urdu the Moslem branch of Hindustani, and there is a certain amount of rivalry between the extreme communalists on both sides to extend the use of their respective scripts, although this is still a somewhat academic question in a country where less than 10% of the population are literate in any language. The thesis that English serves as a *lingua franca* for India holds true only to a very limited extent since less than 2% of the population can read, write, or understand English.

Language barriers and illiteracy are obvious handicaps in the development of democratic government in India, but this obstacle should not be overestimated, because political ideas can and are spread widely by means of the spoken word. In this connection it may also be noted that a Chinese resident of Peiping cannot understand a Cantonese—a fact which has not prevented the growth of a common feeling of unity and national loyalty. Indian leaders also point out that the existence of more than 80 languages and dialects in the Philippines has not prevented the attainment of responsible self-government for the Filipino people, and since the population of India is nearly 25 times that of the Philippines, they maintain that India should not be disqualified for self-rule on linguistic grounds even if she had 2,000 languages and dialects.

The institution of caste, which lays down for every orthodox Hindu rigid rules as to whom he may marry, what he may eat, and what occupations he may pursue, is a more serious obstacle to Indian unity and social progress. Caste dates back to the earliest Aryan invasions of India, and is

supposed to have been designed to preserve the purity o the Aryan race by preventing inter-marriage with the dar skinned Dravidians. Many of the "Untouchables" of mo ern India—Hindus outside the pale of caste—are descen ants of the original inhabitants of India, conquered centuri ago.

The caste system is supported by strong religious sanc tions; some authorities, in fact, maintain that it *is* the Hind religion. "Orthodox Hinduism demands of the individu not so much the acceptance of any precise creed or dogm but rather that he adapt himself to his place in the cast hierarchy and be diligent in his observance of the traditiona duties and restrictions it imposes on him." Caste is closel bound up with the Hindu doctrines of *Karma* and the trans migration of souls. Hinduism teaches that since eternit there has been a succession of rebirths. Death is only th beginning of another life, and men must pass through a innumerable succession of births and deaths until at las salvation is achieved. According to the law of *Karma*, o deeds, a man's character and his present lot in life are irrev ocably determined by his deeds during his previous ex istence. Thus *Karma* determines the caste into which a man is born, and all social inequalities are explained on the basis of previous *Karma*. These fatalistic doctrines are obviously of considerable social and political significance, since they encourage a spirit of resignation, and acquiescence in ex isting evils, rather than a determined effort toward progress and reform.

Originally, there were four castes: the Brahmans, or priests and scholars; the Kshatriyas, or warriors; the Vaisyas, or merchants, artisans, and traders; and the Sudras, or serv-

ants and serfs. Over the centuries, however, a multitude of sub-castes has developed, determined by locality, by specialized occupations, by particular social customs, etc. Below the castes—literally "out-castes"—are the Untouchables, or "Depressed Classes" as the British call them. Untouchability has been aptly described as "Jimcrowism" on a fantastic scale. The Untouchables are pariahs who "pollute" a high caste Hindu by touch, or even on sight in some parts of southern India. Though they are Hindus, they are forbidden the use of temples, schools, and bazaars. They live in segregated communities, and are restricted to the most menial and degrading occupations.

The chief characteristics of the caste system are that marriage between castes is forbidden; that each caste is limited to particular occupations; and that no one can progress from a lower to a higher caste. Religion, public opinion, and India's economic and political backwardness have combined to keep the system in force. It was, in fact, entirely compatible with an economy based on thousands of isolated village communities, each comprising a more or less self-sufficient unit in which each man had his traditional function. This economic basis of caste, however, is now disintegrating, and the rigidities of the system are gradually breaking down as a result of increased railway travel, the influence of western ideas, and, above all, the growth of modern industry and the destruction of the traditional division of labor.

Nevertheless, the caste system is still a formidable obstacle to the development of the democratic ideals of social and political equality, and to the growth of national as against sectional or caste loyalties. In recent years, the fight against "untouchability" and caste restrictions has been led

by representatives of the Indian nationalist movement, but their efforts have been hampered by the reactionary elements among the orthodox Hindus, and by the restrictions imposed on the development of modern industries and democratic political institutions which could replace the old ties of caste with new social ties and common interests. Indian nationalist leaders therefore maintain that the caste system, far from being a legitimate barrier to Indian self-government, can only be broken down when India attains real political power and the opportunity for extensive industrial development.

Next on the list as an obstacle to Indian unity and a barrier to India's political freedom is the "communal" problem, i.e., the relations among the various religious communities in India, and more particularly those between the Hindu majority and the strong Moslem minority. India today is approximately two-thirds Hindu and one-fifth Moslem.[2] The minor religious groups—Sikhs, Parsis, Jains, Christians, etc.—total about one-tenth of the population, but do not contribute in any important degree to the problem of "communal" tension. The Moslems are in a majority in Bengal, the Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Province, and Sind, while the remainder of British India and most of the Indian States are predominantly Hindu.

Racially, there is very little difference between the Hindu and Moslem communities, since the great majority of the Indian Moslems are descendants of converts from Hinduism. The two religions, however, are utterly dissimilar. Islam

[2] The 1941 Census lists 256 million Hindus, including 40 million Untouchables, 88 million Moslems, 6 million Christians, almost 6 million Sikhs, and 24.5 million members of other religions.

is a fighting, proselytizing creed. Hinduism stresses the virtues of passive submission. Moslems are more individualistic, do not believe in caste, and do not worship idols. Hindus play music at festivals; Moslems do not. Moslems have an important feast, Baqr Id, at which the sacred cow of the Hindus is killed by sacrifice. Yet religious differences cannot be considered the primary cause of communal conflict in its modern form. Such differences, for example, do not explain why religious conflict is far more prevalent in British India than in the Native States, although the intermingling of the two communities occurs equally in both; nor why it has become so much more intense in recent years, culminating in the demand of the extreme Moslem communalists for the partition of India and the creation of a separate Moslem State.

As one British observer has aptly put it, "the germs of the trouble are nearly always present, but they only become virulent when there is some other cause of irritation." This other cause is partly economic, partly political. In the areas where Hindu-Moslem friction is most intense, the two communities are divided on economic lines. In the Northwest, for example, the money-lenders are Hindus and the peasants are Moslems; in the Northeast, the great landlords are usually Hindus and their tenants Moslems. In other areas, the large landlords are Moslems while the peasants are Hindus. In the towns, the shop-keepers, employers, and professional men are usually Hindus, while the craftsmen and workers are Moslems. Finally, because they were quicker to take advantage of the opportunities for western education offered by the British, the Hindus hold the majority of the best government jobs.

Religion in India is also a powerful political weapon. It is far easier to arouse the illiterate, ignorant, superstitious masses of the people on a religious issue than on a complicated economic or social question, with the result that political leaders frequently exploit the religious sentiments of the people to obtain their own purely secular ends. The chief religious organizations, the Moslem League and the Hindu Mahasabha, for example, are each controlled by landlord and banking interests who have little reason to divide on religious grounds. The conflict between them is primarily one of securing more political power and better jobs for themselves, while they are in entire agreement as to the need for curbing dangerous "popular" movements. As Jawaharlal Nehru observes in his *Autobiography*, "Hindu and Moslem communalism is in neither case even *bona fide* communalism, but political and social reaction hiding behind the communal mask."

British rule has unquestionably played an important if indirect part in preserving divisions along religious lines and providing fertile soil for the growth of communal antagonism. From the very outset, the British Government in India adopted a policy of religious "neutrality." Faced with many different religious groups, the British in the name of impartiality proceeded to maintain everything intact, and to uphold each community's separate rights. As a result of this policy, existing divisions were frozen, differences between the various religious groups were accentuated, and the natural process of unification was retarded by the fact that every rival creed and sect was encouraged to advance its special claims.

In addition to their unwillingness to arouse popular an-

tagonism by interfering with established customs, the British had other excellent reasons for assuming the role of impartial arbiter among rival factions. They were quick to recognize that the existence of these communal divisions could be utilized to great advantage both for maintaining their control and as grounds for remaining in India to preserve law and order. Long before the days when "the protection of minorities" made its appearance as an aim of British policy in India, we find Sir John Strachey somewhat tactlessly declaring that "the truth plainly is that the existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India." And as recently as July 1926, Lord Olivier, formerly Secretary of State for India, wrote in the London *Times* that "no one with a close acquaintance with Indian affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there is a predominant bias in British officialdom in India in favour of the Moslem community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy, but more largely as a makeweight against Hindu nationalism."

In recent years, this theory of using communal rivalries to off-set the growing strength of the nationalist movement has developed into an administrative system through the device known as communal electorates, i.e., the division of the Indian electorate into separate categories with a definite number of seats reserved for each minority group in the legislative assemblies. It was not an accident that this electoral device was first introduced in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, commonly known as the Morley-Minto reforms, at the time when the Hindu-led nationalist movement was first showing strength. Under this Act, the Moslem community was made a separate electorate and granted double repre-

sentation, in recognition of what Lord Minto described as its "political importance . . . and the service . . . it rendered to the Empire."

The system of communal electorates was extended and elaborated in each successive constitutional reform scheme, and reached its climax in the "Communal Award" of 1932, which was embodied in the 1935 constitution. Under the 1935 Act the Indian electorate was divided into no less than 19 religious and social categories, e.g., Moslems, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Depressed Classes, Landholders, Commerce and Industry, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, etc., each of which was given separate representation in the Provincial Legislative Assemblies. In effect this system prevents a Sikh member of the Congress Party, for example, from voting for a Hindu or Moslem member—he must perforce cast his vote for a fellow Sikh. Clearly such a system is not conducive to unity among the various groups, and tends to promote political organization on religious lines and thus foster religious antagonisms.

It is worth noting that though the Simon Report declared communal electorates to be a "necessary evil" in India, a different view was taken by the special British Commission reporting in 1928 on the constitution of Ceylon, where the political situation was much less acute and involved somewhat different problems. This Commission declared that: "In surveying the situation in Ceylon we have come unhesitatingly to the conclusion that communal representation is, as it were, a canker on the body politic, eating deeper and deeper into the vital energies of the people, breeding self-interest, suspicion, and animosity, poisoning the new growth of political consciousness, and effectively preventing the development of a national and corporate spirit. . . . There

can be no hope of binding together the diverse elements of the population in a realization of their common kinship and an acknowledgment of common obligations to the country of which all are citizens so long as the system of communal representation, with all its disintegrating influences, remains a distinctive feature of the Constitution." The Simon Report might have used the identical words for India, but for other considerations.

The British Government has stoutly denied that the system of communal electorates is part of a "divide and rule" policy, and has maintained that it is necessary to protect the minorities from being swamped by the Hindu majority. Yet this contention is hardly borne out by the results of the last local government elections held before the communal electorates were introduced. In the United Provinces in 1910, for example, where the Moslems formed only one-seventh of the population, the joint electorates returned 189 Moslems and 445 Hindus to the District Boards, and 310 Moslems and 562 Hindus to the Municipalities, showing that the voters did not choose candidates solely on religious grounds. Furthermore, an examination of the allotment of seats among the various groups under the present system suggests that protection of minorities is not the only consideration, inasmuch as specially weighted representation is granted to those groups which are least identified with the nationalist movement.

The British have also argued that the Hindus and Moslems themselves must arrive at a basis of agreement before communal electorates can be abandoned. The Communal Award of 1932 was necessary, they maintain, because the Indian members of the Round Table Conference of 1931 failed to

agree on a system of joint electorates. It may be noted, however, that the delegates to that Conference, with the exception of Gandhi, were hand-picked by the British Government from the extreme communalists on both sides, who were guaranteed to disagree.

More important is the fact that the British Government has continued to deal with the chief communal organization among the Moslems—the Moslem League—as though it were the political equal of the Indian National Congress; implying that the League's president, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, spoke for India's 88,000,000 Moslems, while the Congress leaders spoke for the Hindu majority. Yet the record of the League shows that it has never represented more than a fraction of the Moslem community. In the elections of 1937, the first held under the 1935 constitution, the League polled only 5% of the total Moslem vote (total Moslem vote: 7,319,445, Moslem League vote: 321,772) and won only 108 of the 482 seats reserved for Moslems in the Provincial Legislative Assemblies. Nor is there evidence that the League has substantially increased its following since the adoption of its "Pakistan" program in 1940, which calls for the creation of a separate Moslem State, a program denounced by all nationalist elements among the Moslems. Following its adoption, many important members of the League itself resigned in protest, and even the Moslem Premiers of the Punjab and Sind have since declared that they do not agree with Mr. Jinnah on the question of partition. An All-India Independent Moslem Conference, held at Delhi in April 1940 and attended by 50,000 Moslems representing every shade of opinion except that of the League, unanimously adopted a resolution which declared in part that "India, with its geo-

graphical and physical boundaries, is an indivisible whole and as such it is the common homeland of all citizens irrespective of race and religion. . . . From the national point of view, every Moslem is an Indian."

On the other hand, the Indian National Congress is not a communal organization. It has a large Moslem membership, and includes representatives of all the minor religious groups, although the majority of its members are Hindus. The Congress has always insisted on the indivisibility of India; its declared aim being a united self-governing India led by men who are Indians rather than Hindus or Moslems. It is programmatically opposed to communal separatism, and its leaders have consistently maintained that the Moslems as well as the other communities could secure their legitimate interests in a Constituent Assembly based on universal adult suffrage. In their view, the "communal issue" can only be settled on the basis of Indian independence and a political and economic program which will unite the Indian people irrespective of caste or creed. They point out that in the Trade and Peasant Unions, Hindus and Moslems have united without feeling the need for separate electorates because they share common economic interests. Similarly, they believe that in a self-governing India, the necessity of dealing with political and economic problems common to all sections of the population will cause a natural decline in the emphasis on religious differences.

In other words, the Congress leaders contend that religious differences have been exploited by the communal leaders for their own political ends, and by the British Government as a pretext for its refusal to grant India any real political power. However, the Congress itself cannot be

absolved of all blame for the continued existence of communal divisions in India. Certain Congress leaders, most notably Gandhi, have consistently sought to identify the nationalist movement with a revival of Hinduism. In all of Gandhi's agitation and propaganda, his religious conceptions and the virtues of Hinduism are inextricably mixed up with his general political aims. Even when appealing for Hindu-Moslem unity, Gandhi has made the appeal as a Hindu leader. Gandhi wishes to improve the lot of the Untouchables, but he does not want to abolish the caste system. His aim is to make the Untouchables a new fifth caste—a program which has served to alienate many Untouchables from the Congress program.

The Indian nationalist movement, if it is to achieve its goal of a united India, will have to keep out of its propaganda the flavor of Hindu revivalism and metaphysics. There is ample evidence that the great majority of the poor Moslems would readily respond to the appeal of a progressive non-sectarian leadership and a modern economic and social program on which they could unite with their Hindu fellow peasants and workers. Nehru and the other progressive leaders in the Congress have recognized the importance of such a program, but they have been unwilling or unable to oppose Gandhi's reactionary views on economics and religion. Despite Gandhi's great achievements in arousing the Indian people to struggle for their freedom, his policies and aims, nevertheless, have frequently weakened and confused the program of the Congress Party, and have proved of very considerable value to the British Government in its efforts to cope with the nationalist movement.

Today, the "communal question" is more closely than

ever involved with the larger issue of self-government for India, and the immediate issue of Indian participation in the war. There can be no doubt that the Cripps Mission failed primarily because of British insistence on using the religious and minority problem as an excuse for refusing to allow any immediate Indian participation in the central government or in the organization of Indian defense.

CHAPTER II



INDIA
AN ECONOMIC PARADOX

THE paradox of India, simply stated, is that of a fabulously rich country in which the great majority of the people live in the most abject poverty. India's natural resources rival in variety and extent those of the United States and the Soviet Union. Her mineral resources include one of the largest iron ore fields in the world, with reserves of three billion tons averaging 64% iron content. Estimates of Indian coal resources range from 36 billion to 60 billion tons, and she also possesses huge supplies of manganese, 49% of the world's bauxite, and large deposits of chromite, mica, copper ore, and other important minerals. Her potential hydro-electric power resources are estimated to total more than 27 million horse power, second only to those of the United States.

As an agricultural producer, India's potential capacity is no less impressive. Even with the primitive agricultural methods now employed, her output of wheat, rice, cotton,

jute, silk, oil seeds, hemp, tobacco, sugar, and other commodities rank her among the world's leading agricultural nations. India is the world's second largest cotton producer, with an annual output of some seven million 400-lb. bales. The production of jute, in which she holds a virtual monopoly, averages about nine million bales annually. In 1936-7, India ranked first among the world's tobacco producers, with 1,497,000 acres growing 1,375 million pounds. In 1939-40, India had more than 4 million acres under sugarcane, and her production of 1.4 million tons of sugar surpassed that of any other country. India is also the world's leading producer of hides and skins, while her vast forests provide a limitless supply of tanning materials, as well as timber, lac, turpentine, and bamboo pulp.

In addition to these extensive natural resources, India possesses a vast supply of labor power, with a heritage of skilled craftsmanship carried down from the days when Indian manufactures occupied a prominent place in world commerce; when Indian calicoes, silks, and muslins were the rage of the fashionable European world, and Indian steel was used to forge the famous blades of Damascus.

Potentially, then, India is one of the richest countries in the world, capable of supporting both light and heavy industries, as well as an ample volume of agricultural production to feed her people and supply raw materials for industry and for export. Yet the great majority of the Indian people live in extreme poverty on incomes of from 2¢ to 4¢ a day.

This grinding poverty manifests itself in many ways: in the prevalence of malnutrition and disease; in the horrible living conditions of the industrial workers; in the enormous burden of agricultural debt and the steady increase in the

number of landless peasants. In 1933, the Director of the Indian Medical Service, Major-General Sir John Megaw, estimated that 39% of the Indian people were well-nourished, 41% poorly nourished, and 20% very poorly nourished. At least 80 million people of India were perpetually hungry. He reported further that disease is "widely disseminated throughout India and is increasing steadily and rather rapidly." In Bengal, 78% of the population were under-nourished. "The peasantry of Bengal," says an official report of the Director of Health, "are in large proportion taking to a dietary on which even rats could not live for more than a few weeks." Low physical vitality is another striking evidence of Indian poverty causing the average expectation of life for an Indian to be only 23 years as compared with 63.7 years in the United States.

If permanent indebtedness, semi-starvation, and disease are the lot of the average Indian peasant, the living conditions of the industrial workers in the cities present an equally appalling picture. Wages of from 10¢ to 15¢ a day are common for unskilled labor, and even the skilled Bombay textile workers get only about $8 to $10 a month. The 1931 Census showed that 74% of the total population of Bombay City lived in one-room tenements, with six, ten, and even twenty persons per room. Conditions were similar in other industrial centers. John Gunther, after an inspection of the living quarters of workers in the British-owned jute mills of Calcutta, bestowed on India the dubious honor of possessing "the worst slums in the world . . . Workmen getting three or four rupees ($1.20) a week live in cells with no light, no sanitation; the entrance to the hovels is a tunnel streaming with sewage . . . Disease, squalor, and degradation of

the human being to the level of animals are rampant as men live in stinking filth." [1]

Poverty—acute, degrading, devitalizing poverty—is thus the most striking feature of Indian life as it must be lived by the vast majority of the Indian people. The immediate query as to why such poverty should exist in a country as richly endowed as India with the natural resources for a prosperous, well-rounded economy leads us naturally to a consideration of the present economic structure of India.

The Roots of Indian Poverty

The first fact to be noted about the Indian economy is that India is the colony of a highly industrialized nation. For approximately 150 years, India has been developed primarily as a market for British manufactures, a source of raw materials for British industry, and an outlet for British capital investment on very favorable terms. Her financial, trade, and tariff policies are determined by the British Government. Her currency is linked to sterling, and her banking system is largely British-controlled. Under the system of "imperial preference" imposed on India, British products enjoy a competitive advantage over both non-Empire and Indian manufactures in the Indian market, while India in return is given the privilege of favored rates for the sale of her raw materials and semi-manufactured goods on the British market. British capital predominates in virtually all important industrial and commercial enterprises in India,—in railways, shipping, insurance, etc. and in the tea, coffee,

[1] John Gunther, *Inside Asia*, 1942 War Edition, Harper & Brothers, New York and London, p. 408.

and rubber plantations. Another important feature of the Indian economy is that because most of the large banks are either Government-controlled or are branches of British and other foreign banks, Indian industrialists find it almost impossible to finance industrial enterprises of which the British do not approve.

India's modern banking system is composed of four types of banks. At the apex of the financial pyramid is the Reserve Bank of India, established in 1934. Like the Bank of England, it is privately owned and controlled, but is empowered to issue currency, regulate exchange, and conduct the Government's banking and remittance business, and thus controls credit in the same way as the Bank of England. The Governor, two Deputy Governors, and five Directors are nominated by the Government of India, but only six of these eight have voting power. Eight Directors are privately elected, with eight votes. Thus the Bank is protected by law from political control. Indians maintain that the purpose of setting up this new Central Bank at the time of the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935 was to ensure that even if the advance of constitutional reform should eventually result in Indians getting some voice in the central government, the stronghold of financial power would remain securely in British hands.

Below the Reserve Bank comes the Imperial Bank of India. It, too, is privately owned and controlled, with an authorized capital of £9 million. The Imperial Bank with some 200 branches and sub-branches, holds approximately one-third of all bank deposits in India. Next come the Exchange Banks, or private British and foreign banks, which control the financing of India's export and import trade. With head-

quarters outside India, these banks are wholly non-Indian in character. The most important are the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, the Mercantile Bank of India, the National Bank of India, the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, and the P. & O. Banking Corporation. These Exchange Banks, too, hold nearly one-third of total Indian bank deposits. At the bottom of the financial pyramid are the Indian Joint Stock Banks, most of which are controlled by Indian capital, whose combined deposits total slightly more than one-third of the total bank deposits. Thus the Imperial Bank and the Exchange Banks dominate Indian banking, and Indian industrialists complain bitterly that this control has been used to the detriment of Indian industrial development. One of the major objections of Indian businessmen to the provisions of the new constitution of 1935 was that it strengthened and confirmed British financial control in India and specifically prohibited the Central Legislature from passing any measure which "discriminated against" British trade, industry, banking, and shipping interests operating in India.

The Managing Agency system is another important instrument by which British control over Indian industrial development is maintained. Under this system, a relatively small number of managing agency firms promote, control, and to some extent finance a wide variety of industrial companies and commercial enterprises. The Agency controls their operations and output, and markets their products, in return for which it receives the lion's share of the profits. It is estimated that about thirty of these Agencies control more than 400 important concerns in India. Although there are Indian as well as English managing agencies, those hav-

ing the best connections with the Government and the banks are naturally British and are therefore the most powerful. An outstanding example is Andrew Yule & Co. which manages and in part owns fifty-four firms, operating in fifteen different fields, including jute, tea, coal, transport, insurance, and sugar.

A second feature of India's economy is the backwardness of her industries. Except for a brief period during and immediately after the First World War, British policy up to 1939 did not encourage the development of modern industries in India, particularly the basic heavy industries which would reduce Indian dependence on British products. As a result, when the Second World War broke out, India was supporting only about 2% of her population by modern industries, and the only industries employing more than 100,000 workers each were cotton spinning and weaving mills, jute mills, railway workshops, and cotton ginning and pressing factories. A few light industries such as sugar, soap, matches, cigarettes, etc. had made considerable progress during the decade 1929-1939, but there was virtually no production of machinery, of non-ferrous metals, or of industrial chemicals. Only about half of India's limited steel requirements were being supplied by domestic production. The annual output of coal was less than 30 million tons, and only some 3% of the potential hydro-electric power resources of the country were being utilized. India had no automotive manufacturing industry, and was entirely dependent on foreign sources for most steel manufactures and all types of machine tools, to say nothing of heavy guns, tanks, and airplanes. Although India's industries have been substantially expanded since 1939, production is still wholly

disproportionate both to her potential resources and her immediate military needs.

The third outstanding feature of the Indian economic structure is the fact that more than 80% of the Indian people live in India's 730,000 villages, and depend for their existence on what they can raise from the tiny scattered strips of land which make up the average peasant holding. Moreover, the proportion of the Indian population dependent on agriculture has *increased* during the last twenty-five years, despite the growth of a few modern industries. During the period, 1911-1931, for example, the number of workers employed in all types of industry, including handicrafts, declined from about 17 million to about 15 million, while the working population increased from 149 to 154 million. This "de-industrialization" is the result of the continued decline of the old handicrafts in the face of competition from foreign machine-made goods, without a compensating growth of modern factory industries.

It is this failure to develop industries as alternative sources of employment that has led to the terrific over-pressure on agriculture which is the basic cause of Indian poverty. As long ago as 1880, the Indian Famine Commission, appointed by the British Government, reported that: "At the root of much of the poverty of the people of India . . . lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the mass of the population, and that no remedy for present evils can be complete which does not include the introduction of a diversity of occupations, through which the surplus population may be drawn from agricultural pursuits and led to find the means of subsistence in manufactures or some such employment."

Yet between 1891 and 1911, the percentage of the population dependent on agriculture increased from 61% to 72%, as more and more artisans, craftsmen, spinners, weavers, etc. were forced to turn back to the land. This meant a continuous diminishing of the amount of land available to each cultivator. In 1911, Sir Thomas Holderness estimated that there was "less than one acre and a quarter per head for that portion of the population which is directly supported by agriculture," and went on to point out that "not only does the land of India provide food for this great population, but a very considerable portion of it is set apart for growing produce which is exported. . . . In fact it pays its bills for imports . . . and discharges its other international debts, mainly by the sale of agricultural produce. Subtracting the land thus utilized for supplying foreign markets from the total area under cultivation, we shall find that what is left over does not represent more than two-thirds of an acre per head of the total Indian population. India, therefore, feeds and to some extent clothes its population from what two-thirds of an acre can produce. There is probably no country in the world where the land is required to do so much." [2]

Sir Thomas might have added that there is probably no country in the world where the land is less able to meet the heavy demands placed upon it. Not because of any lack of natural fertility, nor because there is no more cultivable land available, but because of the conditions of land-ownership and the extreme poverty of the peasants. More recent surveys of landholdings in various parts of India repeat the same

[2] Sir Thomas Holderness, *Peoples and Problems of India*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1911, pp. 139-40.

story of the growing pressure of the population on the land, the increasing exploitation of the peasantry by landlords and money-lenders, and the fragmentation of holdings to the point where they cannot possibly support their owners. The peasantry consequently fall deeper and deeper into debt, until they lose their land entirely and join the ranks of the landless agricultural laborers.

Rent and taxes usually consume more than half the peasant's income, and most of the rest goes in payments to the money-lenders who frequently charge up to 100% interest. This leaves the peasant with about 5¢ a day to live on. We have seen what this acute poverty means in terms of malnutrition and disease. It also means that the peasant can use only the most primitive methods of cultivation; that fertilizers, live-stock, agricultural implements, etc. are far beyond his reach, with the result that the level of production is declining, the soil is losing its fertility, and the area of cultivated land is actually decreasing because the peasants are too poor to maintain, much less increase their holdings.

Other symptoms of the agrarian crisis in India are the rapid increase in the volume of agricultural debt, and in the number of landless peasants on the one hand and absentee landlords on the other, as a result of the expropriation of land by money-lenders and speculators. The world depression hit the Indian peasantry especially hard, and the slight recovery of agricultural prices since 1934 has not been sufficient to overcome its effects. Between 1928-29 and 1933-34, the value of agricultural crops in India declined by 55%, but the money payments which the peasant was required to make for taxes, rent, etc. remained unchanged. This halving of the peasant's income inevitably led to a rapid increase in

the agricultural debt, and the abandonment of land by tenants who could no longer pay rent. It is estimated that between 1931 and 1937, the agricultural debt rose from £675 million to £1,350 million.

Here, in brief outline, we have the basic causes of Indian poverty. With industries under-developed, the vast majority of India's millions have no other means of subsistence than a tiny fragment of land, and because of the system of land revenue and land tenure, they must bear a triple burden: tax to the Government, rent to the landlord, and interest to the money-lender. Improved methods of cultivation are impossible both because of the size of the average holding and the poverty of the cultivators. The landlords and the money-lenders who expropriate the peasants' land for failure to meet interest payments, have no interest in farming their lands as large-scale units; they merely sublet parcels of land to as many tenants as possible so as to increase their revenues from rent.

A prevalent but fallacious theory about India's poverty is that it is the result of "over-population." "Where is the Indian Malthus who will inveigh against the devastating torrent of Indian children?" demands one British economist, and official reports echo this sentiment. Thus the Whitley Commission on Labor in India, reporting in 1931, declares: "Increased production of food ultimately effects little improvement in the standard of living . . . since the population quickly multiplies under these favourable conditions. Formerly war, famine and pestilence were all active in reducing the numbers for which the land had to provide sustenance; war and famine have been largely negative as active influences, whilst deaths from pestilence have been con-

siderably reduced. The result is a steadily growing pressure on the land . . ." Such arguments convey a picture of an enormously rapid increase of the Indian population as a result of British rule. Yet the actual rate of increase has been markedly less than that of any European country. Between 1880 and 1930, the population of England and Wales increased by 54%, that of India by 32%. Only in the decade from 1921 to 1931 was the rate of increase in India, 10.6% as compared with 14.2% in the United States, higher than that of England and other European countries. Indian poverty, however, does not date from 1921.

Another implication of the Malthusian critics of India's birth rate is that the growth of population has outstripped the growth in the volume of food produced. This is not the case. Between 1910 and 1930, population increased by about 17%, food production by about 30%. It is true that the present production of food is wholly inadequate, but the reasons for this inadequacy lie in the system of production and the failure to develop the available resources, not in any absolute over-population. In fact, there is every reason to believe that by making full use of her resources, India could support a far larger population than at present. More than one-third of the cultivable area has not yet been brought into cultivation, and the methods employed on the present cultivated area are so primitive that the yields per acre are only about one-third of those obtained in other countries. It may be granted that under existing conditions, food production is inadequate for the population, but should this lead to the conclusion that the population must be reduced, and not that the existing methods of production must be changed?

The cause of Indian poverty is not the rate of population growth, but the fact that India is a case of arrested economic development. In western countries, the growth of industries encouraged a rapid increase in population and provided for its support. In India, industrial development has been artificially restricted, and an increasing proportion of the people has been forced to depend on a primitive system of agricultural production, which, in turn, is less and less able to meet the demands placed upon it because of the crippling conditions of land ownership and taxation.

CHAPTER III



THE MECHANISM OF BRITISH RULE

BRITAIN has ruled India for more than 150 years, and not the least remarkable thing about that rule is that it has been accomplished with such a relatively small administrative force. According to the 1931 Census, there were 168,000 British in India, of whom 60,000 were in the army, 21,000 in business or professional occupations, and 12,000 in the civilian government services. In other words, less than 100,000 were directly engaged in the task of ruling India, or about 1 for every 4,000 Indians. Even with the total disarmament of the Indian people, and the fact that the most important sections of the army—artillery, tanks, and air force—are kept exclusively in British hands, it is obvious that this small number could not possibly rule 390,000,000 people by power alone. Other instruments were essential, and India stands as perhaps the greatest monument to British skill in devising administrative techniques for preserving control over a vast, alien, and frequently hostile population.

One of these techniques has already been discussed, namely the policy employed with reference to religious and political minorities which, in practice, served to perpetuate communal divisions and to split and weaken nationalist sentiment. Another highly effective technique has been to create a vested interest in the maintenance of British rule among certain sections of the Indian population, such as the Indian members of the army and civil service, the large landowners who hold their titles from the State, and the Indian Princes, whose power, privileges, and security against internal rebellion are guaranteed by the British Crown. Finally, the British Government has met the rising challenge of Indian nationalism by a series of constitutional reforms providing for the establishment of representative legislative assemblies, but at the same time refusing to allow these bodies to deal with any matters affecting British interests or the basic organization of the British regime, e.g., finance, military expenditures, foreign affair police, or tariff policies.

The Government of British India

British India, as we noted above, comprises about 55% of the total area of India and contains approximately three-quarters of the population. It is ruled directly by the British Government through the Secretary of State for India in London and the Governor-General (or Viceroy) in New Delhi. Since the federal provisions of the 1935 constitution have never been put into effect, the form of the Central Government of British India is still that established by the India Act of 1919. Power is centralized in the Governor-General and his appointed Executive Council, each member

of which serves as a Minister in charge of some branch of the Administration, without responsibility to the Central Legislature.

This Legislature is composed of two Chambers—the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. The former has a membership of up to sixty, of which thirty-four are chosen by an electorate limited by high property qualifications to about 17,000, while the balance are nominated by the Government. The Legislative Assembly, composed on a communal basis, contains 145 seats distributed as follows:

	Seats
Nominated:	
Civil Servants	26
Others	15
Elected:	
Non-Moslems	52
Moslems	30
Sikhs	2
Europeans	9
Landlords	7
Commerce and Industry	4
	145

The electorate for the Legislative Assembly too, is restricted by property qualifications; the franchise being held by slightly more than one million, or pproximately four-tenths of one per cent of the population of British India.

The Central Legislature deals with questions affecting British India as a whole, and with local government in areas where Provincial Governments do not exist. The Governor-General, however, has unlimited over-riding powers to veto any act of the Legislature and to enforce the passage of legislation which he considers essential. He may also prevent the

introduction of legislation affecting finance, religion, defense, and foreign affairs. Approximately 80% of the Central Budget, e.g., army appropriations, debt interest, major salaries, etc. is not subject to vote by the Legislature. With regard to votable expenditure, the Governor-General can, and frequently does, restore a rejected item to the Finance Bill and declare it passed. In addition, the Civil Service and the Indian Police are controlled entirely by the Governor-General in Council.

Within the eleven Provinces of British India, the form of government is that established by the Government of India Act of 1935, which provided for a considerable degree of "Provincial Autonomy." The Governor of each Province, appointed by the British Government, is assisted by a Council of Indian Ministers responsible to an elected legislature. Although the new franchise, based on educational and property qualifications, excludes the poverty-stricken and illiterate majority of the population, thirty-four million were given the right to vote, as against nine million under the previous constitution of 1919. However, these Legislative Assemblies are composed on a communal basis, with nineteen separate categories of voters, and with specially weighted representation for certain minorities. Although the Indian Ministries are nominally authorized to deal with such matters as education, public health, agricultural improvement, local taxation, and the maintenance of law and order, their actual power is strictly limited, since the Provincial Governors hold over-riding powers similar to those of the Governor-General in the Central Government. The Governors also have certain "special responsibilities" in the discharge of which they are responsible only to the

Governor-General. These include the maintenance of law and order, the protection of minorities, etc., for which the Governors may take any action they think necessary. Finally, if a Governor should fail to find Ministers willing to conduct the Government "on lines consistent with the discharge of his special responsibility," he can declare the constitution suspended and "assure to himself all such powers as he judges requisite to retrieve the situation."

The Indian Princes

One of the principal results of the famous Mutiny of 1857 was that the British abandoned the policy of annexing native principalities. That Mutiny arose in the annexed territories, and it was the native rulers of the unannexed territories who remained aloof and, in some cases, even aided the British authorities. The lesson was quickly learned, and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 stated that "we desire no extension of our present territorial possessions. . . . We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of the Native Princes as our own." Lord Canning, Governor-General of India in 1860, described the aim of this policy as follows: "It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made all India into *Zillahs* (British Districts) it was not in the nature of things that our Empire should last fifty years; but that if we could keep up a number of Native States without political power, but as royal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained. Of the substantial truth of this opinion I have no doubt; and the recent events have made it more deserving of our attention than ever."

Seventy years later, Professor Rushbrook-Williams, an important Government spokesman on behalf of the Princes, reiterated this view: "The rulers of the Native States are very loyal to the British connection. Many of them owe their very existence to British justice and arms. . . . Their affection and loyalty are important assets for Britain in the present troubles and the readjustments that must come. . . . The situation of these feudatory States, checkerboarding all India as they do, is a great safeguard. It is like establishing a vast network of friendly fortresses in debatable territory. It would be difficult for a general rebellion against the British to sweep India because of this network of powerful loyal Native States."

The States are, of course, unmitigated autocracies, and the assurance of British protection has relieved their rulers of fear of popular rebellion. A few of the States are relatively progressive. Travancore and Baroda have a higher percentage of literacy than the Provinces of British India. Large-scale electric power projects have been initiated in Mysore, and Hyderabad spends considerable sums on irrigation. But the States as a whole are far more backward in both agriculture and industry than British India. Although a few of the States have set up the semblance of democratic institutions, only about 30 have any so-called legislatures, and these are purely consultative, with nominated members in most instances. All real power—legislative, executive and judicial—is concentrated in the hands of the ruling Prince, who commands the entire State income and has life and death powers over his subjects. Even in the most progressive States, there is very little freedom of the press, of speech, or of association. Public meetings are either banned entirely

or must have the sanction of the police.

The States recognize the suzerainty of the British Crown, but are theoretically autonomous in everything except foreign affairs. In practice, the British control the States through the Political Department, a branch of the British Government in India, responsible directly to the Viceroy. The Political Department appoints the British Residents and Agents-General who supervise the internal affairs of the States. While most of the major States have British Residents, some share one Resident, while the smaller States are grouped into Agencies which are managed by a British Agent-General. Many States also employ British financial and military advisers. Almost every Native Prince has a prime minister, or *Dewan*, who does the actual work of governing the State, and who is chosen from any part of India. Sometimes these *Dewans* circulate, serving several States in succession. As a rule, a ruler choosing a *Dewan* consults the Political Department, and today at least twenty *Dewans* are British, many of them retired members of the Indian Civil Service.

For a long period after the Mutiny, British policy was to keep the Princes isolated not only from British India but also from each other. It was only after the rise of the nationalist movement that cooperation among the Princes was encouraged. During the First World War, amidst great anxiety over the growing unrest in India, the establishment of a Chamber of Princes was suggested, and this body was formally inaugurated in 1921. The 109 rulers entitled to salutes of eleven guns or more, are members of the Chamber in their own right; 126 minor States elect twelve representatives; and the petty principalities, about 325 in all, are not

represented. The Chamber is a purely consultative body and has no legislative powers.

Prior to 1930, the chief preoccupation of the Princes was the question of "paramountcy" i.e., the extent of the British Crown's right, as the Paramount Power, to intervene in the internal affairs of the States. In 1927, the Indian States (Butler) Commission was appointed to study the question of paramountcy, but it soon became evident that the British Government was unwilling to define the limits of the imperial power. "Paramountcy must remain paramount," was the answer of the Butler Commission, and the Princes were assured that "on Paramountcy alone can the States rely for their preservation in the generations to come. Through Paramountcy is pushed aside the danger of destruction or annexation." This, of course, made it painfully clear to the Princes that they were existing on the mercy of the British Government and that their own prestige depended on its continued strength in India.

To add to their fears, India in 1930 was shaken by the great civil disobedience campaign, by strikes and boycotts, and other manifestations of a rising popular movement, while the British Government was in the hands, among others, of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Wedgewood Benn, whom the Princes erroneously suspected of favoring a policy of independence for India. The Princes and their ministers therefore flocked to London in great numbers to attend the Round Table Conference of 1930, and expressed their willingness to enter a Federal Government for India, provided their internal sovereignty would be guaranteed and the obligations of the British Crown to protect them would remain unaltered.

Conservative British opinion seized upon this offer as the ideal solution for the problem of Indian constitutional reform. With the "stabilizing" weight of the Princes in the Central Government, it might be safe to permit a degree of self-government in the Provinces of British India. Thus the Government of India Act of 1935 was drawn up to provide for a Federal Government in which the Princes were given strong representation in the Central Legislature. That the Federal Provisions of the 1935 Act are not yet in force is due to the strong opposition of virtually all sections of opinion in British India, and the fact that the Princes themselves felt that the provisions did not adequately safeguard their power and privileges.

The Indian Civil Service

In the administration of British India, the British Government has built up an extensive and powerful bureaucracy, which is usually described as the most efficient and responsible civil service in the world. The important role played by these civil servants is indicated in the following description of their functions, taken from Volume I of the Simon Report: "In India, civil servants are distributed over the whole country, and are engaged in duties of an extraordinary variety and technical difficulty; they will be found lecturing in universities or bridging rivers, fighting epidemic disease or dealing with widespread riots, excavating a prehistoric city or installing a water supply for a new one. There are, it is true, secretariats in Delhi and the provincial capitals; but the number of officials in them is relatively small. The great body of government servants do their work

in 'the districts' far removed from the headquarters of government, and in the public mind they carry an individual responsibility for the success or failure of the administration." Until 1919, the civil service literally governed British India, and even after the introduction of a degree of provincial self-government in the recent constitutional reform measures, the power of the Central Government services such as the I.C.S. (Indian Civil Service) and the Indian Police remains virtually unrestricted.

Before 1887 practically no Indians were employed in any important positions in the Services. Since that date, the British Government has responded to Indian demands by gradually extending Indian participation, although the admission of Indians to the higher ranks is of fairly recent date, and all key positions are still retained in British hands. The subordinate central services and provincial services are now predominantly Indian in personnel, e.g., the Civil Medical Department, the Forest Services, the Engineering Department, etc. And even in the political directorate at the top, which is called the Indian Civil Service as distinct from the minor services, there are now only 585 Englishmen as against 617 Indians. The I.C.S. is probably the most privileged civil service in the world. It enjoys enormous prestige, and its members receive high salaries, many special allowances, long leaves of absence, and extremely generous pensions. Control of the I.C.S. rests entirely with the Governor-General, and the protection of its "rights" from popular interference is one of the "special responsibilities" of the Governor-General and the Provincial Governments.

This "Indianization" of the administrative machine, al-

though originally undertaken with reluctance by the British authorities, and still frowned upon by British Civil Servants of the old school who tend to be highly sceptical of Indian efficiency, has nevertheless proved one of the most effective methods by which Britain has enlisted Indian support for British rule. By offering secure careers, high pay, and other privileges, the British have been able to transform a large percentage of the Indian educated class into their agents, including many who might otherwise have been leaders of the nationalist movement. Most British spokesmen claim that this "Indianization" of the civil services was consciously undertaken to prepare the Indian people for self-government, but its effect has actually been to enlist Indian support for a British-controlled administration which, in the opinion of Indian nationalists, is a very different thing.

The attitude of the Indian nationalists toward "Indianization" is perhaps best explained by a quotation from Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography*. Nehru is discussing the need for Indian unity and a common national outlook, and makes the following point: "If we think in terms of the existing political and economic structure and merely wish to tamper with it here and there, to reform it, to 'Indianize' it, then all real inducement to joint action is lacking. The object then becomes one of sharing in the spoils, and the third and controlling party inevitably plays the dominant role, and hands out its gifts to the prize boys of its choice. Only by thinking in terms of a different political framework . . . can we build up a stable foundation for joint action. The whole idea underlying the demand for independence was this: to make people realize that we were

struggling for an entirely different political structure and not just an Indianized edition (with British control behind the scenes) of the present order, which Dominion Status signifies." [1]

India's Armed Forces

Although the Indian Civil Service is usually described as the "steel frame" of British administration, the ultimate basis of British rule in India has always been the Indian Army. Few Americans have any clear idea of the organization of this Army, and are consequently both perplexed and irritated by the present attitude of Indian nationalists toward the question of their country's defense. A brief sketch of the composition and functions of the Indian Army may serve to indicate at least a few of the reasons why the Indian leaders have been so insistent in their demands for a share in the organization of India's defense, and for the right to train and arm the Indian people for resistance.

In the first place, the process of "Indianization" has not been extended to the higher ranks of the Army. According to Sir Valentine Chirol, the eminent English historian of Indian affairs, "that Army can in fact only be called Indian in the sense that it is recruited from Indians, chiefly of the races reputed for their martial qualities, and that it has a corps of native officers who are seldom more than glorified non-commissioned officers, promoted mostly from the ranks,

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom*, The John Day Company, New York, 1941, pp. 114-5. Although this is a slightly abridged version of the English edition, published under the title *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Autobiography*, John Lane, London, 1936, it contains two new chapters and some additional appendices.

and who, whatever their seniority may be, automatically take rank under and receive orders from the youngest British subaltern in the regiment. . . . The Indian Army has such a fine record of gallantry and loyalty that it would be invidious to compare it to a merely mercenary force, but it is essentially a great fighting engine, British-made, British-driven, and British-controlled, for which India provides only the raw material of men." [2]

Sir Valentine then proceeds to refer indirectly to the other major Indian grievance regarding the Army of occupation, when he states that "the whole question of the Indianization of the Army is further aggravated by the fact that military expenditure is itself much the heaviest of all the burdens to be borne by the Indian tax-payer . . . who has no means of controlling the amount of the purposes to which it is applied."

The real nature of the military burden borne by the people of India is seldom appreciated. Such oft-repeated phrases as "Britain's heavy responsibility for India's defense" have served to conceal the simple but astonishing fact that the Indian people have been compelled to tolerate an imperial army for avowedly imperial purposes largely at Indian expense. The British Government has always attached great importance to India as a base of operations, and as a training ground for imperial troops, but so successfully have these aims been translated as "responsibilities" for Indian security that few people outside India are aware that the Indian people have not only paid a major share of the cost of defending British interests in all parts of Asia, but have also paid for the support of a large force of "internal security

[2] Sir Valentine Chirol, *India*. London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1926, pp. 277-79.

troops" whose chief function is to crush any attempt on the part of the Indian people to overthrow British rule.

The present organization of the Indian Army dates back to the Mutiny of 1857, and reflects the violent distrust of Indian troops which it engendered in the minds of the British authorities. "The lessons taught by the Mutiny have led to the maintenance of two great principles, of retaining in the country an irresistible force of British troops, and of keeping the artillery in the hands of Europeans." [8] The Indian Army was thus converted definitely into an army of occupation, with Englishmen in the key positions, and these principles have been strictly adhered to, with the tank corps and the air force added to the artillery as exclusively British preserves.

The ratio of British to Indian soldiers has altered from time to time, but has usually been about two British to every five Indians, and the Indian troops are carefully selected and arranged so as to prevent the growth of any solidarity among them. For, as the Punjab Committee on Reorganization advised in their report of 1858, "next to the grand counterpoise of a sufficient European force, comes the counterpoise of natives against natives." Here we have the origin of the myth of the "martial races" from which Indian troops are selected, namely the Gurkhas from Nepal, the Sikhs, the Punjabi Moslems, and certain tribes like the Pathans from the foothills of the Himalayas. These troops are "neatly grouped into battalions, companies, . . . and sometimes even platoons of specified classes (based on tribal, sectarian

[8] Report of Commission on Indian Army Reorganization, 1879. Quoted by G. T. Garratt in *An Indian Commentary*, Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, New York, 1929, p. 202.

and caste distinctions) according to a fixed ratio, and no one who does not belong to one of these classes is allowed to enter the army simply because he is physically fit. . . . These groups are so arranged that they retain their tribal or communal loyalties." [4] The Indian Army is therefore in no sense representative of the Indian people as a whole, and many of the troops, like the Gurkhas and Pathans, have little feeling of loyalty to India as a country.

At the outbreak of the present war, the Indian Army was divided into the Field Army, organized for service abroad, in which the proportion of British troops was about one to three (12 British infantry battalions to 36 Indian); the Covering Troops, mainly Indian, used for keeping "order" on the Northwest Frontier; and the Internal Security Troops, which acted as the real army of occupation, and were composed of five British for every four Indians (28 British infantry battalions to 27 Indian). In none of these forces, however, do the Indian troops constitute an independent fighting unit. They are trained and led by British officers, they are dependent on the British artillery, tank, and air force units, and their functions and duties are laid down for them by the British High Command. They are, as Sir Valentine Chirol points out, a purely professional machine under British control.

Obviously, so long as the military organization of India was envisaged in terms of an army of occupation whose primary function was "the suppression of revolutionary movements, both violent and non-violent, organized and designed to upset the established Government," there could be no possibility of developing a genuinely Indian army to

[4] N. C. Chandhary, *Defence of India*, Allahabad, 1935, p. 32.

take its place. The British authorities have, in fact, placed themselves in the illogical position of saying that India could not be granted self-government because she could not undertake her own defense, and at the same time taking every precaution to make sure that the Indian army under British control should be the only armed force in the country. The Indian people as a whole are completely disarmed, and no form of military training is open to them. It is still a severe penal offense for an Indian civilian to possess a gun or any other weapon.

Since the outbreak of the war in 1939, the Indian army has been expanded from a total of about 215,000 to more than one million troops, many of whom have fought gallantly in Malaya, Burma, the Near East, and Egypt. But there has been no change in the British policy of segregating the army from the civilian population. It is still a professional army, recruited from special groups, and having little if any contact with, or understanding of the aims and interests of the Indian people as a whole. It is a definite addition to British military strength, but it is in no sense an adequate substitute for a people's army recruited from all sections of the population and fighting for definite political aims. The defense of India calls for the same measures as the defense of any other country—arming the people and giving them military training, as well as teaching them the art of guerilla warfare. Unfortunately, such a policy has not been considered compatible with the maintenance of British rule in the past, with the result that India today is militarily weak, her vast manpower is virtually untapped, and her armed forces are not so organized as to command either the confidence or the whole-hearted support of the Indian people.

CHAPTER IV



WHAT INDIA MEANS TO BRITAIN

THE population of India constitutes three-quarters of the total population of the British Empire, and nearly nine-tenths of its colonial population. This fact alone is sufficient to indicate the importance of India to Britain's strength as a world power. The economic value of India to the British industrial and financial structure has been of vital importance at every stage of its development. During the 19th century, Britain controlled four-fifths of the Indian market, and though this monopoly has been weakened, Britain still retains the lion's share of India's trade. Under the system of "imperial preference," 38% of all United Kingdom exports go to India, and 32% of all Indian exports go to the United Kingdom. British capital investment in India is estimated at £1,000,000,000, or approximately one quarter of Britain's total overseas investments, while the value of the annual payments transferred from India to Britain in one form or another is estimated at between £130 and £150 million.

More difficult to compute accurately, but no less important, are the profits which accrue to various private British interests because of Britain's ability to control Indian trade and tariff policies, to manipulate the exchange rate of the Indian currency, and to control the Indian financial and banking structure. British economists point with pride to the fact that England managed to emerge from the world economic depression in better financial shape than the rest of the world. But this was accomplished, partly at least, because between 1931 and 1935 some £203 million in gold went to England from India, or more than the total British gold reserve before the crisis. Some of this came from the native princes and other wealthy Indians who, when sterling was devaluated, sold gold for paper pounds. Much of it, however, was "distress gold" from the Indian peasantry who had no other way to pay their taxes than by the sale of their gold and jewelry, the traditional form of savings among the masses of the Indian people.

In the political and strategic field, India's importance to Britain is equally great. India, as we have seen, provides an excellent training ground and base of operations for a British imperial force in Asia. In time of war, Britain has been able to draw heavily on India for troops, supplies, and funds, and in time of peace, the India taxpayer has met virtually the entire cost of supporting the British forces in India, as well as the cost of an extremely expensive administrative machine. India furnishes Britain with valuable ports of communication on the strategic trade routes to the Far East and Australia. It has been the base from which Britain has maintained control over the whole area surrounding the Indian Ocean, particularly Suez, Egypt, the Persian Gulf, and the

Middle Eastern Empire on the West, and Burma and Malaya on the East.

The central position occupied by India in the British imperial structure was eloquently pictured by Lord Curzon, as Viceroy of India, in a speech delivered on March 25, 1903: "Our Indian dominions directly touch those of Turkey and many parts of the Arabian peninsula, those of Russia on the Pamirs, those of China along the borders of Turkestan, those of France on the upper Mekong. In our dealings with them the Foreign Department in India is becoming the Asiatic branch of the Foreign Office in England. . . . The geographical position of India will more and more push her into the forefront of international politics, she will more and more become the strategical frontier of the British Empire." Three years later, Lord Curzon was addressing the London Society of Pilgrims as follows: "But when you remember that three out of every four of these subjects of the King are in India, that with the possible exception of China, India is the largest and most populous political aggregation in the universe, then I think you will begin to realise to what extent the British Empire is an Asiatic Empire, and how, if we cut out the Asiatic portion of it, it would inevitably dwindle in scale and importance."

In recent years, official British spokesmen have been less inclined to stress the importance of India to Britain. Instead, they have chosen to speak chiefly in terms of Britain's role as a benefactor to India, and have even developed the theory that Britain's main aim has been to train the Indian people to become entirely self-governing, a concept which would certainly have horrified Lord Curzon. Occasionally, however, there have been frank statements of the vital role of

India in the industrial and financial structure of Great Britain. In 1935, for example, Winston Churchill declared that "two out of every ten Englishmen depend on India." This outspoken statement was made for the benefit of an American audience in a trans-Atlantic radio address at the time of the debate on the 1935 constitution, to explain "why England cannot afford to give up India." Five years earlier, Lord Rothermere had pointed out in the *Daily Mail* (May 16, 1930) that "many authorities estimate that the proportion of the vital trading, banking, and shipping business of Britain directly dependent upon our connection with India is 20% . . . India is the lynch-pin of the British Empire. If we lose India the Empire must collapse—first, economically then politically." And even the liberal *Manchester Guardian* declared editorially on January 3, 1930 that "there are two chief reasons why a self-regarding England may hesitate to relax her control over India. The first is that her influence in the past depended partly upon her power to summon troops and to draw resources from India in time of need. This power will vanish when India has Dominion Status. The second is that Great Britain finds in India her best market, and that she has one thousand million pounds of capital invested there."

The Benefits of British Rule

We come now to the other side of the picture, namely the contribution of British rule to India. This is inevitably a controversial subject, since the British naturally tend to over-emphasize and the Indians to ignore or belittle the benefits which the British administration has given India. In-

disputably, Britain has done a great deal for India, even though the record of British rule contains a number of black pages which have contributed much to Indian hostility and distrust of British motives.

The average informed Englishman, if asked to present the case for British rule, could offer a long and impressive list of accomplishments of great value to the Indian people. First and foremost, he would probably stress the fact that Britain established internal law and order, abolished civil strife, introduced a strict and impartial system of justice, and gave the Indian people the benefit of a highly efficient civil service. Then, by making English the language of higher education, Britain enabled Indians from all parts of the country to understand each other, and opened up to the Indian educated class the rich storehouse of western thought, modern science, and the political literature of democracy and human freedom. Finally, through the establishment of representative political institutions, and by increasing the association of Indians in all branches of the administration, Britain did much to develop Indian political life and to train the Indian people for self-government.

As one British historian recently expressed it, "the idea of an Indian nation could scarcely have been born if the work done by the British in India had not been done. They had brought all India for the first time under a single allegiance and two-thirds of it under a single frame of government; and they had not only made it possible, by developing higher education through the medium of a single language, for Indians from all parts of multilingual India to understand one another; they had also made it possible, by creating a modern system of communications, for them to meet and

know and correspond with one another. It might even be said, indeed, that Indian nationalism was the child of the British *Raj*, and it can certainly be said that in making it easier for Indians to acquire a sense of common interests and a common destiny, the *Raj* was doing as great a service to India as any that it could do; for it was helping her to meet her greatest need." [1]

Similarly, Lord Halifax, in his important speech at the Town Hall in New York on April 7, 1942, laid great stress on the fact that one of the major aims of British policy in India has always been "to foster the creation of a United India," in order that Britain might "devolve upon her people the control of their own affairs," and, concurrently, that Indian nationalism is largely the result of the introduction of English law and English education through which India learned the ideals of freedom and self-government. In the minds of eminent British spokesmen, therefore, the present struggle of the Indian people for independence is itself a tribute to the beneficence of British rule.

Whatever may be said for the complete accuracy of these descriptions of British accomplishments in the political sphere, British accomplishments in the material field are more tangible and less open to controversy. Outstanding has been the work in the field of irrigation and famine prevention. There are today in India some 79,000 miles of government canals, and the area irrigated directly by state works has increased from 10 million acres in 1879 to about 32 million acres—by far the largest irrigation project in the world. Associated with irrigation and famine control has

[1] R. Coupland, *Britain and India, 1600-1941*. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. London, 1941, p. 51.

been the Government's program for the improvement of agriculture, including the creation of seed depots, experimental stations, etc., and in forestry. Rivaling, or perhaps surpassing the irrigation work in importance has been the construction of 42,000 miles of railroads, the fourth largest railway system in the world, representing an investment of £150,000,000 of British capital. Indian railways normally carry more than 500,000,000 people a year, and it would be difficult to exaggerate their importance in breaking down the static and isolated village economy of India. As Professor Coupland describes it, the railways "did more than bring the varied and divided Indian peoples into contact and make them conscious of the fact that all of them were Indian; they did more, too, than help in killing famine and in maintaining order and in defending the frontier. Railways broke through the natural barriers which kept the countless villages of India isolated little units, feeding and housing and clothing themselves on a primitive economic basis. Now suddenly, owing to the railways and the complementary development of ports, sea transport, commercial law and practice, and all the machinery of modern business, the products of the peasant's labour in his fields or at his craft became saleable and profitable far outside his own locality, not only anywhere in India but in the world at large. Indian wheat, in particular, was soon selling in the world market, and prices soared from their poor local level to those fixed at Liverpool or Chicago. Other agricultural products shared in the growth of the export trade—rice, oilseeds, cotton, jute, tea." [2] In addition to the railroads, Britain has also given India an excellent postal administration and

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

telegraph and radio service, and air and shipping communications with all parts of the world.

Accomplishments in the fields of public health, social reform, education and industrial legislation have been less substantial, largely because the expenditure on administration, public works, the army, and the debt service consumes approximately 90% of the Indian budget, leaving little to spend on these "nation-building" services. Therefore, education absorbs only about 5% of the total revenue. Including the sums spent by local bodies, the annual per capita expenditure for this purpose is estimated at about 18 cents, as compared with about $6.50 in the United Kingdom and about $20.00 in the United States. Official figures claim that 50% of the boys of school age in British India are now attending schools, and 17% of the girls. But the preliminary returns of the 1941 Census show that nearly 90% of the population of India as a whole are still illiterate. Expenditure on the Medical and Public Health Departments consumes only about 2.5% of the total revenue. The British claim that they have reduced the death rate from 26 to 24 per thousand in the past fifty years, but, nevertheless, the prevalence of disease in India is appalling. For example, there are still about one hundred million cases of malaria every year, of which not more than 10% get proper treatment.

The British record in social reform has been limited by the long-standing policy never to interfere with the religious or social customs of Indians if it can possibly be avoided. The "Sarda Act" does in theory prohibit the marriage of girls younger than 14 and boys under 18, but it is full of loopholes. It was not until 1933 that it was made an offense under

the Indian Penal Code for a parent to pledge his child's labor for payment of a debt, and even now this law is continually evaded. It must of course be admitted that many social reforms are strenuously opposed by orthodox Indians, but it is also true that the efforts of progressive Indian leaders to wipe out some of the worst social practices has met with little support from the ruling authorities.

The British claim that they have made a beginning in industrial legislation with a Workman's Compensation Act, and an act reducing hours of work to fifty-four a week, as well as laws forbidding the employment of female labor in mines and restricting child labor. This legislation, however, applies only to those "organized" industries, covered by the Factory Act, which either use power or employ more than twenty workers. But of India's twenty-five million industrial workers, only about five million at most are employed in these organized industries. The vast majority of workers are employed either as unskilled labor on public works, hired by contractors with no stipulation as to wages paid, or in countless small workshops where there is no restriction of hours and where working conditions are usually abominable. A typical example is provided by the small factories making *beedies*, or cigarettes made of coarse tobacco, of which the Whitley Commission on Indian Labor reported as follows: "In these factories very young boys are employed for long hours, the smaller children being preferred for their supple fingers in rolling the dry leaves into cigarettes. It is the general practice for children to begin work at five or six years of age, and work without a weekly rest-day for ten or twelve hours a day on a wage of about two *annas* (about 5¢). Many

of the parents of these child-workers are in debt to the employers and pledge their labour as a method of repayment of the loans."

A particularly objectionable feature of the Indian industrial system is the role played by the jobber. Unemployment is acute in India, and there is keen competition to secure even temporary jobs in factories. The hiring of all workmen is in the hands of the "jobber" who must be bribed in advance, or with the promise of next month's wages, before a workman can be hired. In *Inside Asia*, John Gunther has described the working of this system in his own inimitable way: "Suppose you want a job. You go to the jobber, who demands his fee for giving you one. This in Cawnpore is usually twenty rupees ($7.40). You have not got twenty rupees. . . . So you borrow the twenty rupees from the jobber, who is also the money-lender. . . . The normal rate of interest on your debt is two *annas* (five cents) per rupee (37 cents) per month, which works out to 150 per cent a year. . . . The jobber, if he needs some quick cash, may simply discharge the whole establishment of a factory. . . . Then he extorts his original contribution from the new staff he hires. It should be noted that abuses of this dreadful kind take place in Indian-owned factories as well as those British-owned. . . . But certainly the British *Raj*, which is to both British and Indian factories as an elephant to mice, . . . bears its share of the responsibility for the system which permits such outrages."

In summary, then, it may be said that the principal claims of British rule are, first, that it has contributed greatly to the unity and growth of political consciousness in India, has introduced the ideals of democracy and human freedom, and

brought the Indian people to the threshold of complete self-government; and, second, that it has broken down the old, backward village economy, greatly reduced the threat of famine, and given India the mechanisms of a modern economic structure through the development of railroads, communications, shipping, commerce, and modern industrial establishments.

It must be noted, however, that the theory that Indian nationalism developed primarily because of the introduction of representative assemblies, and of English law and education, takes no account of the social and economic conditions which impelled the Indian educated class to resist British domination and to demand a share in the control of India's political and economic development. Nor does it take into consideration the fact that the first two periods of Indian nationalist struggle, beginning in 1905 and 1917 respectively, coincided earlier with the defeat of Imperialist Russia by an Asiatic Power and with the first Russian Revolution, and later with the world war of 1914-18, the rise of popular movements in colonial countries, the slogans of national self-determination, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. Would India have been untouched by these world-wide trends, and remained aloof from the world-wide struggle for national freedom, if she had not had the benefit of British rule? If so, why is it that the struggle for national unity and freedom is so much further advanced in China, also a backward, heterogeneous country, but one which was never subjected completely to foreign control. In a certain sense, of course, Indian nationalism may be correctly considered the product of British rule, inasmuch as the nationalist movement has certainly grown to its present dimensions through the process

of its struggle against foreign domination. Similarly, however, Japan might justifiably claim credit for the present degree of national unity in China.

With regard to the second British claim, it is unquestionably true that by giving India railroads, highways, ports, telegraphs, shipping, etc., Britain destroyed the backward, static economy of ancient India and laid the basis for the development of a progressive, modern economic structure. Railway construction, in particular, necessitated the establishment of railway workshops, the opening up of coal and iron mines, and the expansion of iron and steel production, and thus paved the way for the manufacture and use of mechanized equipment in other branches of industry. But it is equally true that the economic development of India has been arrested at a low level, and that the greater part of her industrial resources are undeveloped because of her colonial relationship to Great Britain. Indian leaders, therefore, while acknowledging the constructive role played by British capital in the development of India in the past, contend that British control over the Indian economic structure in the modern period has ceased to be constructive, and instead has thwarted and retarded the development of the Indian economy by means of its financial and political domination.

CHAPTER V



THE INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE

UP TO the time when it was forcibly brought to their attention by the rapid spread of war in the Pacific, the Indian political situation was a closed book to most Americans, who were inclined to regard it as something incomprehensible and remote. This lack of both interest and understanding was accentuated by the fact that all news from India had to pass through a strict censorship, with the result that only the most limited and sketchy references to the Indian nationalist struggle found their way into the American press. Today there is no lack of interest in the Indian situation, but there is still considerable confusion as to the nature of the various political groups in India, and with the exception of Gandhi and Nehru, the names of most Indian leaders mean little to the average American.

The Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress (Nationalist Party) is by far the strongest and most representative political organiza-

tion in India. It is really more than a political party, and might better be defined as the organized expression of the Indian people's demand for independence. Its membership is open to anyone who wishes to work for Indian independence by Congress methods, and includes Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, and Christians; rich industrialists and poor peasants; conservatives and radicals; intellectuals and illiterates. The Congress dues are four *annas* (about 10¢) a year, but even this sum is too large for many Indian peasants and workers. At present the dues-paying membership is about three million and a half, with about the same number who are no longer able to pay dues but who continue to work unofficially as Party members. Actually, the influence of the Congress is far greater than its membership would suggest. It has organized an extensive program of education, medical relief, hygiene and public health, cottage industries, cooperative societies, etc., which is carried out by millions of non-party workers under Congress leadership, with the result that Congress has become a household word in all parts of India. The Congress has frequently demonstrated the strength of its organization and support, especially in the last ten years, by carrying on its varied activities without interruption despite the imprisonment of thousands of its leaders and the confiscation of its funds.

The Congress structure is organized as follows: first come the four *anna* members in the villages and towns. These primary members choose delegates to the Provincial Congress Committees, and these Committees in turn choose the All-India Congress Committee, a kind of parliament with a membership of about 350. The President of the Congress, annually elected by this Committee and responsible to it,

selects fourteen men and women to serve as his cabinet. It is this Cabinet, consisting of the President and his fourteen associates that is called the Working Committee.

Since 1929, the Congress program has called for the attainment of complete independence for India, and Congress activities have been concentrated largely on the struggle with Great Britain. The political outlook of the Congress, however, has not been narrowly confined to India alone. Inspired by Nehru, who is sometimes called the "foreign minister" of the Congress, its leaders have taken an increasingly active interest in world political events. The Congress protested the invasions of Manchuria and Ethiopia, supported Loyalist Spain, and denounced the policy of appeasement adopted toward fascist aggression. Since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, Congress has taken a strong pro-Chinese stand, organizing a highly effective boycott of Japanese goods and sending medical units and supplies to China.

Internally, the aim of the Congress is an independent, united, and democratic India and it is therefore strongly opposed to communal representation and communal agitation in general as being anti-nationalist. Its bill of rights, adopted in 1931, calls for complete equality of citizenship in a united India, irrespective of creed, caste, or sex, and for the protection of the culture and language of minority groups. The Congress answer to the problem of religious minorities is that India's constitution should be framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage, both in British India and in the Indian States. Such an assembly, it maintains, would enable all minority groups to secure their legitimate interests. The Congress

leaders further insist that the abolition of an electoral system based on separate religious categories, and the removal of an "external power" to which all minority groups can appeal for protection, plus the necessity of assuming responsibility for political and economic questions affecting all sections of the Indian people alike, will cause religious differences to decline rapidly in importance. Indians will then be Indians first, and Hindus or Moslems second, and their attitude on matters of defense, trade, finance, agrarian policy, etc. will have little to do with their religious affiliations.

All members of Congress share a common devotion to the cause of Indian freedom, but the heterogeneous character of the Congress membership, including as it does men of widely differing political beliefs and economic interests, has led to a considerable amount of internal dissension as to the methods to be used in the fight for freedom, and also on the kind of political and economic structure which a free India should endeavor to establish. On the one hand, Congress is a mass organization, deriving its political strength chiefly from the millions of peasants and workers who look to it for a program of radical economic and social reform as well as for leadership in the fight for political independence. Among its leaders are men like Jawaharlal Nehru who see India's fight for freedom in terms of organized revolutionary action on the part of the Indian peasants and workers, and who are unalterably opposed to any compromise with British imperialism. But the dominant control of the Congress policy and party machinery has always rested with the "right-wing" elements—industrialists, landowners, professional men—who though opposed to Britain's monopoly of political and economic power and anxious to lead the Indian people in the fight for

freedom, are at the same time afraid that a too rapid and militant advance of the movement would end by destroying their own privileges and power as well as those of the British.

As a group, these right-wing nationalists are too weak to win the fight for independence single-handed, and have consequently been forced to seek mass support in order to bring pressure to bear on the British Government. But they have been consistently opposed to any militant mass action on the part of the Indian workers and peasants, even though it might be directed in the first instance against British rule. They distrust the theories of the left-wing groups in Congress, and have always inclined toward a policy of compromise with Britain and a more gradual "constitutional" progress toward political independence.

It is this attitude on the part of the right-wing elements in Congress that has given Gandhi his unique position of power in the Indian nationalist movement. Gandhi, unlike any other conservative leader, is venerated and adored by millions of the Indian people to whom he has given new hope, new self-respect, and a new faith in their power to achieve freedom. Moreover, the vigor and charm of his personality, coupled with his great political astuteness, has won him the respect and loyalty of men like Nehru who do not share his political and religious beliefs. On the other hand, Gandhi's doctrine of "non-violence" and his steadfast opposition to all forms of militant action, have made him an ideal leader for the moderates. They could count on him to arouse the people for mass demonstrations against British rule, and at the same time to keep these demonstrations within limits. Originally, Gandhi's doctrine of "non-violent non-cooperation" was accepted by his associates, many of whom did not share his

religious convictions, as an eminently practical tactic for the early stages of a struggle by an unarmed people against a powerfully armed government. But the record of Congress history during the past twenty years shows clearly that "non-violence" has been an extremely useful weapon in the hands of the conservatives in Congress in their efforts to direct the mass movement into channels where it could do no harm to Indian propertied interests.

It is no coincidence that among Gandhi's staunchest political and financial supporters are men like Ghanshyamdas Birla, the Calcutta industrialist and millionaire, and Jannalal Bajaj, a very rich and powerful business man. Of course, many Indian industrialists within the Congress have no use for Gandhi's economic theories and his rejection of all forms of modern industrialization and his advocacy of a return to the primitive life of the spinning wheel and village industries. But for the time being, until freedom from British control can be achieved, Gandhi fulfills a unique role in leading the Indian peasants and workers, while simultaneously protecting the interests of the industrial and landowning groups. Thus the characteristic feature of modern Indian politics—the indispensability of Gandhi—is in reality the expression of the conflicting interests represented in the Indian nationalist movement. And it is this conflict of interest, particularly the fear of the right-wing nationalists of the consequences of a militant popular movement, that explains why at so many critical moments in the history of the nationalist movement, the Congress under Gandhi followed a seemingly inconsistent, vacillating, and defeatist policy.

In many important aspects, the Indian National Congress of today has characteristics similar to those of the Kuomin-

tang Party in China in 1927. Both parties' strength came from a broad representation of all classes of society: industrialists, merchants, landlords, bankers, professional workers, intellectuals, workers, and peasants. The continued power of both parties depended upon the unity of all these diverse elements. In 1927, in China, this power was sharply weakened when the right-wing groups, alarmed by the militancy of the masses, turned against them and thereby retarded the advancement of their own interests. It was only the continued activity on the part of the workers, peasants, and students of China that kept the nationalist spirit alive and strong enough to resist Japan so successfully after 1937. The Indian National Congress has suffered similarly from the mistaken and confused fears of the right-wing nationalists. History may show that in the recent period of Indian political history, culminating in the Cripps Mission and its aftermath, it was the hesitant and vacillating role of these Gandhi-led "moderates" that blocked the advance of India's nationalist aspirations. And history may also show that the continued organization and education of the Indian people by men like Nehru and others, in spite of the obstacles put in their way not only by the British but by their own conservative colleagues, will preserve for India that united determination to achieve freedom and social progress which the Cripps Mission has consciously or unconsciously succeeded in weakening.

The All-India Moslem League

The Moslem League and its leader, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, are virtually inseparable, and the policies of the League faithfully reflect Mr. Jinnah's intense political ambitions and his

hatred of the Congress which he accuses of seeking to establish Hindu domination over India. The League was formed in 1906 by a group of ultra-conservative Moslems, headed by the Aga Khan, who had been successful in persuading the Viceroy to grant separate electorates and specially weighted representation for the Moslems in the new Legislative Councils established by the Morley-Minto reforms. The object of the League was declared to be the "promotion of loyalty to the British Government," the safeguarding of Moslem interests, and the placing of "Moslem needs and aspirations before the Government in temperate language."

Originally intended to serve as a counterweight to the Hindu-led nationalist movement, the younger Moslems in its membership soon forced the League to adopt more progressive aims, and in 1913 it entered into negotiations for unity with the Indian National Congress. In 1916 the two organizations reached agreement on a common program calling for Indian self-government within the Empire, and in the post-war wave of nationalist activity, enthusiastic popular demonstrations were held to celebrate Hindu-Moslem unity. During the civil disobedience campaign of 1920-22, however, the increasingly radical character of the Congress program and Gandhi's emergence as the dominant leader of the nationalist movement alarmed and irritated the more conservative leaders of the League, and after the collapse of the campaign they severed their connection with the Congress, although many rank and file members of the League remained in the nationalist movement.

For the next fifteen years, the League was little more than a club for conservative Moslem landlords; its political activities being confined to agitation designed to secure more

political power and better government positions for the wealthy Moslem community. The League was strongly represented in the Moslem delegation to the Round Table Conference of 1931, headed by the Aga Khan, which was successful in securing substantial concessions for the Moslems under the Communal Award of 1932. In 1934, Mr. Jinnah was made permanent president of the League at the suggestion of the Aga Khan, and during the election campaign of 1937, he made strenuous efforts to secure a mass following for the League by appealing to Moslem nationalists to "cooperate" with all nationalist and progressive groups in the country, and declaring that "The Moslem League is pledged against the New Constitution and is for replacing it by democratic and full government." Despite Mr. Jinnah's demagogic exertions, however, the League made a very poor showing in the elections, while the Congress scored a sweeping victory. Mr. Jinnah immediately reversed his tactics. All nationalist pretensions were abandoned, members of the League who were also members of the Congress were dropped for "double allegiance," and Mr. Jinnah proclaimed himself the champion of Moslem "nationalism" against the rule of the "Hindu majority."

The cleavage between Congress and the League deepened rapidly. Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues seized upon the fact that the new Congress Ministries now in power in eight of the eleven Provinces of British India were predominantly Hindu in personnel to raise the cry that "Islam is in danger." The Moslem community, he maintained, could never tolerate a system of government which left them subject to majority rule. All manner of alleged instances of Congress discrimination against Moslems were played up, and even

the Moslem Premier of the Northwest Frontier Province was denounced for "anti-Moslem activities." Mr. Jinnah toured the country constantly, denouncing Congress, and appealing to the religious sentiments of the Moslem masses by painting a lurid picture of the fate of the Moslem community should they be forced to submit to a Hindu-dominated government. These tactics were not too successful, for the Moslem members of Congress remained loyal, and other important Moslem organizations fully supported the Congress demand for a united India and the abolition of divisions on religious lines. Nevertheless, the strong element of Hindu revivalism which colored Congress policy under Gandhi, and Gandhi's own habit of mixing Hindu reform schemes with nationalist political activity, had served to alienate many Moslems from Congress and to provide fertile ground for Mr. Jinnah's communalist agitation.

The League's prestige was further heightened by the favored treatment it received from the British Government of India, which tacitly accepted the League's claim to speak for all Moslem India, and dealt with it as the political equal of the Congress. As we have already noted, the existence of the League provided the British with an excellent excuse for delaying any political concessions to the Indian nationalists on the grounds that Congress and the League must first settle their internal differences and agree on a common program for India's political future. And with the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the League still further proved its value as a counterweight to the nationalist movement by offering full cooperation in the British war effort, provided Moslem interests were guaranteed protection against the Congress. The anti-Congress activity

of the League reached its height in the spring of 1940, when Mr. Jinnah put forward his demand for *Pakistan*, the partition of India into Moslem and non-Moslem states. This demand, which struck directly at the basic nationalist aim of a united India, alienated many Moslem nationalists, but it served to confuse the political situation, and also appeared to confirm the British contention that the Indian people were hopelessly divided, and that self-government for India was impossible so long as the "minorities" were so strongly opposed to majority rule.

Despite its demagogic appeals to the Moslem masses, however, the League has continued to be dominated by a group of wealthy, conservative landowners who are chiefly concerned with protecting their interests against the agrarian and social reforms sponsored by the Congress. "The chief *raison d'etre* of the Moslem League," wrote the London *News Review* on April 2, 1942, "is the fear of many Moslem landlords of being one day somewhat roughly treated by their numerous tenants (Hindu and Moslem alike) should they tire of paying their rents and feudal dues. For that reason they are opposed to the Congress demands for agrarian reform, and hesitate to cooperate in the same war effort as the Congress." This conservative outlook has made the League an excellent political medium for Mr. Jinnah, who has skillfully capitalized on the conservative Moslems' fear of Congress radicalism and on the British need for support against the nationalists, to satisfy his own desires for greater political power.

Jinnah is a colorful and forceful personality who has inspired the passionate loyalty of many Moslems and the violent antagonism of others. An able lawyer, he began his

political career in 1906 when he became private secretary to Dadabhoy Naoroji, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress. He rose rapidly in Congress circles and soon became a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. In those days, Jinnah was a strong nationalist and the hero of both Hindus and Moslems. He joined the Moslem League soon after its formation, and was one of those who worked hard to promote unity between the League and the Indian National Congress. Jinnah was not an orthodox Moslem; he favored English dress, married a Parsi woman, and paid little attention to religious issues.

With Gandhi's rise to power in the Congress, however, and with direct mass action supplanting parliamentary debates as the principal weapon of the nationalist movement, Jinnah broke away from Congress and retired temporarily from active politics. In the early 1930's he saw an opportunity to re-enter politics in a movement wherein he could be the dominant leader. Returning to India in 1934 after several years in England, he became president of the Moslem League and launched his campaign against the Congress for its alleged attempts to establish Hindu supremacy. Though still an unorthodox Moslem, Jinnah abandoned his Bond Street clothes for Moslem dress, his fluent English for Urdu, and based his campaign on inflammatory appeals to save Moslem culture and nationalism. The former nationalist became India's arch-communalist agitator, and seized every possible opportunity to undermine the Hindu-Moslem unity he once tried to create. His followers hail Jinnah as the "Savior of Islam in India," the gallant champion who has prevented the domination of the Hindu majority under which Moslems would be condemned to an inferior status.

But nationalist Indians, both Moslem and Hindu, denounce him as an inordinately ambitious political opportunist, and one of the greatest obstacles to Indian independence. In their opinion, Jinnah's chief fear is that Hindu-Moslem unity would lessen his own political importance and power.

Other prominent Moslem leaders outside the Congress are Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, prime minister of the Punjab, and Fazlul Huq, prime minister of Bengal. Sir Sikandar is a distinguished soldier, banker, and business man, who is head of the Unionist Party in the Punjab and follows a strongly conservative line. He is a member of the Moslem League, but the Punjab Government is by no means controlled by the League, which won only three seats in the last Punjab elections. Sir Sikandar opposes Jinnah's partition plan, and has showed a much more conciliatory attitude toward Hindu-Moslem unity than Jinnah. Fazlul Huq, one of the leading members of the Praja Party in Bengal, has generally supported Jinnah, and the League has its strongest following in Bengal. But Huq, like Sir Sikandar, has declared his opposition to the partition scheme.

Other Moslem Organizations

The press outside India has rarely mentioned another very influential Moslem organization, the Jamaiat-ul-Ulema. The British Government has also ignored its existence, and has never invited any of its representatives to attend any of the conferences held on Indian problems. The Jamaiat-ul-Ulema was founded in 1919 to protest against the treatment of Turkey after the war, and collapsed soon after Kemal Pasha came to power. It was revived under the

leadership of Mufti Khifayatulla, principal of the Aminia Madrasah, the great Arabic College at Delhi. He led the organization into cooperation with the Congress and was later jailed for civil disobedience.

The vast majority of Ulemahs, or Moslem Divines, belong to the Jamaiat. It has a dues-paying membership of about 200,000, but its influence is far greater than this would suggest, since membership is restricted by a religious and education test. The Jamaiat has always worked closely with the Congress, appearing in joint mass demonstrations, picket lines, etc., and during the severely repressive period of the early 1930's, at least 20,000 of its members were at one time or another imprisoned for political offenses. Standing for complete Indian independence, the Jamaiat advocates joint electorates, and has a close working alliance with the Congress through such well known Moslem leaders as Dr. Ansari and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, who belong to both organizations. There are also large numbers of Moslem Nationalist youths who are members of the Jamaiat as well as the Congress. Furthermore, the Jamaiat is not the only Moslem organization cooperating with the Congress. About 20% of India's 88 million Moslems are Shiahs who have their own organization and support the Congress. In addition, the Momins, numbering about 40 million, also repudiate the leadership of the League, and support the demand for unity and a Constituent Assembly.

The Hindu Mahasabha

The All-India Hindu Mahasabha is the outstanding Hindu communal organization. The opposite number to the

Moslem League, it stands for Hinduism in its most orthodox form, believes fanatically in caste, and attacks the Congress for sacrificing Hindu interests to the nationalist cause. The Mahasabha was the only group in India which wholeheartedly favored the British plan for Federation, which it believed would entrench Hinduism in the government of India, since the majority of the leading Indian Princes are Hindus. The leader of the Mahasabha is the eighty-year-old Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who is also a member of the Congress and has worked strenuously to persuade the Congress to follow a communal policy. Malaviya is a Brahman of Brahmans, the epitome of Hindu orthodoxy, whose life is devoted to proving that if Indians went back to the true Hindu life, all their problems would be solved. Founder of the great Hindu University at Benares, he is a renowned scholar, and a passionate communalist. It was he more than any other man who gave Jinnah the excuse to revive the communalist Moslem League as the bitter opponent of the National Congress. It was Malaviya's considerable influence with prominent Hindu members of the Congress that provided Jinnah with grounds for the accusation that Congress sought to establish Hindu supremacy. Malaviya's Mahasabha has also enraged the Moslems by its policy of *shuddhi*, i.e., the reclamation of original Hindus by the reconversion of Moslems and Christians back to Hinduism.

The Hindu Mahasabha is supported chiefly by wealthy merchants, landowners, industrial magnates, and Hindu Maharajahs. They delight in Malaviya's eloquent portrayals of the ancient glories of Hinduism, and they also approve thoroughly of his eminently conservative position on all

social and political problems, and his opposition to the "radical" tendencies in the nationalist movement. Numerically, the Mahasabha is not very strong outside Bengal, but it has played an important political role in antagonizing the Moslem community and aggravating communal tension to advance the political power of the wealthy and conservative Hindu class.

The National Liberal Federation

The older Indian Liberals hardly constitute a political party, since the Liberal Federation is composed of a group of leaders with very few followers. For the most part, they have outlived their political function since the Congress, to which most of them at one time belonged, has now advanced far beyond their moderate views. Nevertheless, almost every member of the Liberal Federation is a prominent citizen of ability and wealth, and their group is always consulted in times of political crisis. The most famous of these liberal leaders is Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, a brilliant lawyer from Allahabad, who was at one time Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and played a prominent part at the Round Table Conferences in 1930-32. Other prominent liberals are M. R. Jayaker, now a judge on the Federal Supreme Court, and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri from Madras, who was for a time Indian High Commissioner to South Africa. Most liberals favor Dominion Status as the goal for India, and have advocated a policy of cooperation with the British Government. In March 1941, however, a conference of Liberals under the chairmanship of Sapru called upon the British Government to transfer all portfolios

in the Viceroy's Executive Council, including the vital ones of Defense and Finance, to Indian Ministers, and demanded that "in regard to all imperial and international matters, the reconstructed Government should be treated on the same footing as the Dominion Governments." Sapru also stated recently that in all his forty years of political life, he had never known a Government of India "so isolated from the main currents of public opinion."

Ambedkar and the Untouchables

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is the political leader of India's Untouchables, or Depressed Classes, and the first of his class to rise to national prominence. He attended college in Bombay, came to the United States under the sponsorship of the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda, received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1916, and later studied at Bonn University and the London School of Economics. Returning to India in 1924, he soon established himself as an able lawyer and then entered politics. Insults, snubs, and hatred were his lot at the hands of high-caste Hindus, and he determined to organize his fellow outcastes to attack Hinduism by becoming converts to other religions. Coming at a time when the system of communal representation was one of the key issues in Indian politics, this threat gave Ambedkar and his followers tremendous political importance, for by joining any one of the several minor religious groups, they could enormously strengthen its claims. The British Government promptly invited Ambedkar to attend the Round Table Conference in 1930 as the delegate of the Untouchables, where he took a strong anti-Congress line

and demanded separate representation for his group. It was his stand which forced Gandhi to take up the cause of the Untouchables as a political issue in 1932, and to undergo one of his most celebrated fasts in protest against the British plan to give them a separate electorate from the Hindus under the 1935 Constitution. A compromise was finally evolved under which a certain proportion of the Hindu seats in the legislatures would be "reserved" for the Untouchables.

Ambedkar today is a fierce opponent of the Congress on the grounds that a Congress-controlled government would mean control by high-caste Hindus and the perpetuation of the caste system. He wants to abolish caste entirely and denounces Gandhi's program for improving the lot of the Untouchables *within* caste. He himself has become a Sikh and many Untouchables have adopted other religions, but the majority appear to be less concerned with overthrowing Hinduism than with being admitted into the caste system. Ambedkar has also been handicapped by lack of funds and competent assistants, and he and his followers do not at present constitute a very powerful or well-organized political group.

Some Leading Personalities in the Indian Nationalist Movement

It is only natural that the personalities and the forces they represent in the Indian nationalist movement should be difficult for the average American to comprehend. The political problems of India are obviously not those of an independ-

ent and highly developed country like the United States. In the United States, for example, there is no political party comparable to the Indian National Congress. The leading American political parties have a certain homogeneity, but in a colonial country such as India, many different groups and individuals may unite on the one issue of national independence, while holding the most diverse views on all other political and economic questions. Thus, the Indian National Congress is a kaleidoscope of political opinion ranging from ultra-conservative to extreme radical. As we noted before, the control of the Congress leadership has always been in the hands of the "right-wing" groups—the industrialists, landowners, and prominent professional men —who are opposed to any form of revolutionary philosophy or program. But the more progressive, left-wing groups are strongly represented in the All-India Congress Committee, and have a large following among the rank and file members of Congress and among the local party leaders who do the actual work of organization in the villages and towns. These local Congress organizers are usually young men and women who, because they come into direct contact with the peasants and workers, and also because they have no vested interests at stake, are inclined to take a more radical stand on political and economic questions than the "old-guard" party leaders at the top.

The most prominent left-wing group is the Congress Socialist Party, headed by Jayaprakash Narayan, which has built up an increasing following among the representatives of trade union and peasant organizations and the youth groups in the Congress. Unlike the socialist parties in west-

ern countries, the Congress Socialist Party embraces both moderate and revolutionary socialists. Although the Communist Party is illegal in India, there are many individual communists in the Congress, some as independent members and some as members of the Congress Socialist Party. Many of them are active in the rank and file work in trade unions, peasant organizations, and Congress village activities. All the various left-wing groups are agreed on the major aim of attaining independence for India, but the communists and more radical socialists lay greater stress than the others on the necessity for sweeping agrarian reforms and militant trade unionism. Though the left-wing elements have never gained control over the Congress Executive, they have played an important role on numerous occasions in forcing Gandhi and the other conservative leaders of the Party to adopt a more progressive stand than they might otherwise have done. It should be noted in this connection that the M. N. Roy group, sometimes called the "Royists," has been frequently quoted in the British press as though it represented the official communist position. This is not the case. Roy, once a member of the Communist Party, and now leader of a small dissident faction with little mass following, recently formed the Radical People's Democratic Party outside the National Congress.

The leadership of the Congress has reflected the heterogeneous character of its membership, with the conservative supporters of Gandhi invariably holding a majority of seats in the Congress Working Committee. Unfortunately, it is impossible to discuss all the men and women who have played a prominent part in the nationalist movement; this would require a book in itself. However, the following brief

sketch of a few of the leading personalities may help to clarify the complex and frequently bewildering pattern of Indian political life.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

Most foreign observers attempting to describe the "paradox that is Gandhi," have stressed the baffling contradictions of Gandhi, the man, Gandhi the saint, and Gandhi the astute political leader. Everyone who has met him admits his great personal charm, his quick and shrewd intelligence, his tact and consideration in dealing with friends and opponents alike. But when it comes to analyzing the qualities which have elevated him to the rank of supreme leader of the Indian people, they are confronted with the bewildering mixture of a mediaeval religious mystic and a superb political opportunist. Gandhi's doctrine of "non-violence" is a typical example of his use of spiritual concepts to achieve practical political results. His celebrated fasts in prison have been undertaken for the highest of moral issues, yet they have served very useful political ends, both in embarrassing the British authorities and in strengthening his hold over the millions of devoutly religious Indian peasants who look upon him as a martyr and a saint.

Gandhi's approach to every issue is that of a supremely religious Hindu, and he is literally worshipped by millions of his followers as a spiritual leader. Yet it is essential to remember that he is first and foremost a political leader. Indian history since the First World War has been too frequently obscured by the general tendency to regard Gandhi primarily as a saint, rather than a politician. His failures and

vacillations, his inveterate love for compromise, his dictatorial attitude toward his followers, and his reactionary social philosophy with its demand for a return to a primitive village existence, have been accepted as the natural characteristics of a religious leader who should not be judged by ordinary standards. But Gandhi unquestionably achieved his power in India, and his fame throughout the world, only because his "saintliness" was combined with an inordinate political ambition and an astuteness which enabled him to organize and lead the first mass movement against British rule in India. For our purposes, therefore, it is with Gandhi the political leader that we must be concerned; his saintly qualifications should enter in only in so far as they contribute to his great personal influence over the religious, superstitious, and illiterate masses of India.

Gandhi is nearly 73, and has been the outstanding mass leader of India for a quarter of a century. His strength and his weaknesses as a political leader have alternately led the Indian people forward toward national unity and political freedom, and retarded their progress toward these same goals. The political history of India since 1919 may, in fact, be characterized as Gandhi-led and Gandhi-misled. On numerous occasions he has chosen the perfect moment and the perfect issue around which to organize a great popular campaign for Indian emancipation. Nothing could have more effectively dramatized the nationalist movement in the most remote village of India as his campaign for the revival of hand-spinning and cottage industries, and the use of *Khaddar*, or home-spun cotton cloth. It not only provided a direct economic incentive to India's vast and impoverished rural population, but also gave the Indian

National Congress a uniform, and was a direct blow against the principal British export to India.

Yet on each occasion, Gandhi suddenly called off the campaign, or abandoned its leadership, and thereby caused the demoralization and retrogression of the nationalist movement. Gandhi, the great leader of the Indian masses, has always been vigorously opposed to a decisive mass struggle against British rule. Gandhi, the champion of the poverty-stricken peasant, and the advocate of primitive simplicity and the spinning wheel, has been the chosen leader of the Indian industrialist and landlord classes in their efforts to extract economic and political concessions from the British Government. Gandhi, who first aroused the inert masses of India to challenge the supremacy of the British Government, was on many occasions the most valuable weapon the British had in combatting the rising power of the nationalist movement. All the various progressive and left-wing groups that have developed within the Indian National Congress are united in their opposition to Gandhi's philosophy and tactics. Nor do the Indian industrialists and financiers who dominate the right-wing Congress leadership share Gandhi's enthusiasm for a return to a "simple-living high-thinking" past, or his abhorrence of all modern industry and science. Yet the chief characteristic of modern Indian politics has been the "indispensability" of Gandhi, who though he has not been a member of the Indian National Congress since 1934, has continued to exercise the most powerful single influence on the Indian nationalist movement.

In view of the remarkable role that Gandhi has played in Indian politics for so long, it is with difficulty that one

comes to the conclusion that a dominant feature of his character is an inordinate love of personal power. Yet that conclusion is inescapable. The whole pattern which he has imposed upon the Indian nationalist movement is one of a spiritual crusade in which he plays the part of the supreme leader, demanding unquestioning obedience from his disciples and his rank and file followers. By his extreme asceticism, his religious mysticism, and his dramatic gestures to identify himself with the poverty-stricken masses of India, he established himself as the idol of the Indian peasantry. His every action was in keeping with the ancient religious traditions of Hindu India, legends of his infallibility and miraculous powers spread throughout the country, and to millions of Indians he became a superhuman being whose acts and commands were to be copied and obeyed as a religious duty.

Nor did Gandhi confine himself to enlisting the support of the ignorant and backward peasantry. His methods of leadership were equally adapted to the hopes and aspirations of the educated middle classes, the students, intellectuals, and professional workers, whose economic discontent at the lack of opportunities open to them under the British regime found its political expression in extreme nationalism. Finally, his program also appealed to the Indian industrialists and financiers who were struggling to improve their position vis-a-vis the British Government, while at the same time maintaining their power over the Indian people. These conservative propertied interests saw in Gandhi's theory of non-violence an ideal safeguard against a genuinely revolutionary movement which might end in their own demise. Gandhi was thus able to assume control over a movement

composed of widely disparate and conflicting forces, and by his masterly skill at compromise, his ability to inspire unquestioning loyalty among his colleagues, and his amazing capacity to confuse and obscure the real issues when the movement threatened to get out of control, maintain himself as supreme master of India's political destiny for more than twenty years.

Gandhi's outstanding contribution to the cause of Indian freedom is that he gave the semi-starved, illiterate, downtrodden millions of India new self-confidence and new hope, and taught them the value and effectiveness of mass action. Even though he limited that action to passive, nonviolent resistance, a doctrine which appealed to the fatalism and masochism of the Hindu religion and irritated the more militantly progressive sections of the nationalist movement, his ability to inspire millions of Indians to endure beatings, imprisonment, injury, and death without yielding is in itself an achievement of phenomenal proportions. From that type of mass action it is only one step to more positive action on the part of the people to assert their rights. In fact, on several occasions, the very fervor which Gandhi was able to instill into his "non-violent" followers carried them beyond the limits he had set. It was at such times that Gandhi, to preserve his own hold over the people, cut short the movement he himself had launched, either by calling off the campaign entirely, as at Bardoli in 1922, or by bringing a new and more complex question to the fore in order to obscure the issue on which he was facing serious opposition. This latter tactic is clearly visible in Gandhi's role during the period of the Cripps Mission and its aftermath.

and the public good, are busy feathering their own nests." He is completely intolerant of hypocrisy and demagoguery. He has none of the usual qualifications of a mass leader, yet he is revered throughout India for his courage, ability, and untiring devotion to the nationalist cause. Nehru receives no pay for his political work, and most of the family fortune has gone to help finance the Congress movement. During the last elections, Nehru traveled 110,000 miles in 22 months, visiting villages in every remote part of India. Once he made 150 speeches in a single week. Other sources of his popularity are his modesty and his cómplete honesty and integrity. He hates compromise and has nothing of the devious vagueness of Gandhi. His friends, in fact, maintain that his modesty and candor militate against him as a political leader. He has never attempted to build up his personal power, or play party politics. He is a tremendous national influence and Gandhi's logical successor as leader of the Congress, yet he has no control over the party machinery of the Congress comparable to that of Patel and other Gandhi lieutenants.

Perhaps Nehru's greatest contribution to the Indian nationalist movement has been his internationalism—his relating of the Indian struggle to world-wide trends and events. He was the first important Indian leader to pose the Indian problem in a world setting, and to take an active interest in developments beyond India's frontiers. "More and more I came to think," wrote Nehru, "that these separate problems, political or economic, in China, Abyssinia, Spain, Central Europe, India, or elsewhere, were facets of one and the same world problem. There could be no final solution of any of them till this basic problem was solved. . . . As

peace was said to be indivisible in the present-day world, so also freedom was indivisible, and the world could not continue long part free, part unfree. The challenge of fascism and Nazism was in essence the challenge of imperialism. They were twin brothers, with this variation, that imperialism functioned abroad in colonies and dependencies while fascism and Nazism functioned in the same way in the home country also. If freedom was to be established in the world, not only fascism and Nazism had to go, but imperialism had to be completely liquidated." [2]

It was due largely to Nehru's constant urging that the Indian people were aroused in behalf of China, Abyssinia, and Loyalist Spain. Thousands of meetings and processions were organized to dramatize India's sympathy with all peoples fighting for democracy and freedom, and Congress sent food, clothing, and medical supplies to both China and Spain. Regarding Nehru's complete devotion to democracy and freedom, and his violent hatred of fascism, there can be no shadow of doubt. Never conceivably could he become a Quisling for the fascist enemies of Britain. Yet for a full and fatal year, from November 1940 to December 1941, while the world struggle against fascism was deepening and widening, he was confined in a British prison, sentenced to four years of "rigorous imprisonment."

Nehru's relation to Gandhi is not merely that of a disciple to a master. Differing sharply in their mental and emotional outlooks, and in their political views, they are devoted to each other, and have worked in close cooperation for more than twenty years. Gandhi needed Nehru as an able and utterly loyal second-in-command. Nehru needed

[2] *Toward Freedom*, pp. 358-9.

Gandhi because Gandhi alone could arouse the Indian people. Nehru is extremely popular with the youth and left-wing groups within the Congress, but it is undoubtedly true that much of his following among the masses of Indian peasants is due to his position as Gandhi's trusted lieutenant. Nehru is not the official leader of the left-wing in the Congress; there are many others far more to the left than he. But he is probably the most powerful progressive leader in India today. He disagrees with Gandhi's theory that the upper class should hold their wealth in trust for the people, and it seems to him entirely unreasonable that Gandhi, with all his "love and solicitude for the underdog," should "yet support a system which inevitably produces it and crushes it." He also differs basically from Gandhi on the question of non-violence. He admits its political value, but maintains that non-violence alone cannot win India her freedom.

For years Nehru endeavored to win Gandhi to the cause of socialism. It was he who won Gandhi's support for the Bill of Rights resolution adopted at the Karachi Congress in 1931, which was based partly on the American Bill of Rights and partly on socialist theory. He was also largely responsible for converting Gandhi to the aim of complete independence instead of Dominion Status for India. He now appears to have given up hope of converting Gandhi to a socialist philosophy, but he has never broken with Gandhi, or attempted to challenge Gandhi's dominant control over Congress policies. In his *Autobiography*, he talks constantly of his debt to Gandhi, and defends him vigorously against those who call him a reactionary. "Reactionary or revolutionary, he has changed the face of India, given pride and character to a cringing and demoralized people,

built up strength and consciousness in the masses, and made the Indian problem a world problem."

It is only within the last year that Nehru has shown signs of breaking with Gandhi over the issue of Indian participation in the war. Nehru wanted the Indian people armed and organized to aid in the defense of India against Japanese aggression, while Gandhi adhered steadfastly to his doctrine of non-violence. Nehru, in opposition to Gandhi, also supported the use of a scorched earth policy in the event of a Japanese invasion of India. Following Nehru's release from jail in December 1941, Gandhi named him as his successor as the official leader of the India nationalist movement, an action which was generally taken to mean that the Congress membership was growing increasingly impatient with Gandhi's non-violence theory. Gandhi's seemingly contradictory statements in the weeks immediately following the Cripps Mission may indicate the beginning of a radical change in the Congress leadership, with men like Nehru and Rajagopalacharia playing increasingly vital roles.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Sardar Patel (Sardar is a title bestowed on him by his peasant followers, meaning Generalissimo) is the most powerful leader of the right-wing group within the Congress Executive. Patel is the creator and master of the Congress party machine, and undoubtedly has more actual political power than any man in India with the exception of Gandhi. During the period when the Congress ministries were in office, Patel was virtual political dictator of the eight Congress Governments, although technically he was only chair-

man of the All-India Congress Parliamentary Committee. He is the ruthless party organizer and fixer. Once Gandhi has decided on a line or a policy, it is Patel who puts it through. Since Gandhi is no longer a member of Congress, it is Patel who presents Gandhi's resolutions to the Working Committee. Patel gave up a flourishing law practice to join Gandhi in 1919, and since that time has been his right-hand man in managing the party. He is a superb organizer and brilliant campaigner. It was Patel who managed the election campaign of 1937 in which Congress scored a triumph, and he played the leading part in organizing and carrying out the civil disobedience campaigns in 1922 and the early 1930's.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Azad, the Moslem president of Congress, is utterly different from Patel. He is a Moslem theologian and philosopher, a profound scholar and author of the best modern commentary on the Koran. Azad was born in Mecca in 1888 and attended Al Azhar University in Cairo. He then went to India and founded an Urdu newspaper which became immensely successful. Although an orthodox Moslem, Azad is extremely modern in outlook, and has worked hard to bring Moslems into the nationalist movement. As early as 1916, he was sufficiently active in politics to be imprisoned on charges of revolutionary activity. On his release in 1920 he joined the Congress movement and in 1923 was elected president. He is a leading representative of the moderate or right-wing group in Congress, and was again elected president in 1940. He is one of the three Zonal Chieftains in the Congress Executive, each of which is the chief political

organizer of a district. Azad's district, naturally enough, includes those provinces with a large Moslem population—Bengal, the Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Province, and the United Provinces. The other Zonal Chieftains are Patel who, in addition to his role as supreme party organizer, is specifically in charge of Bombay, Madras, Sind, and the Central Provinces, and Rajendra Prasad, who directs Congress activities in Bihar, Orissa, and Assam.

Chakravarti Rajagopalacharia

One other important right-wing leader of Congress who deserves mention is Chakravarti Rajagopalacharia, former prime minister and undisputed political leader of Madras. "C.R." as he is usually called, is a brilliant lawyer and writer, and an extremely able politician and administrator. He is also deeply religious, a fanatic Brahman, and an ascetic. Like so many other able Indians, he gave up a brilliant career to follow Gandhi, and for more than twenty years has been one of Gandhi's closest associates and most staunch supporters. His daughter is married to Gandhi's son.

Though for many years C.R. has been a dominant influence in leading Congress circles, he first achieved world prominence when, after the failure of the Cripps Mission, he broke with Gandhi by demanding that the Indian people be armed to resist invasion. Even more startling was his stand on the question of the Moslem League. He secured the passage of a resolution by the Madras section of the Congress, proposing that the League's demand for the creation of a separate Moslem state be accepted in principle,

in order to pave the way for a coalition government of Hindus and Moslems to organize India defense. This resolution was rejected on May 2nd at the Allahabad meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, which reaffirmed the traditional Congress position that India must remain a united nation. At the same time, the Congress Working Committee adopted Gandhi's resolution calling for a policy of non-violent non-cooperation as the only means left by which the Indian people could resist Japan. Rajagopalacharia thereupon resigned from the Working Committee, condemned the policy proposed by Gandhi as futile, and called for the formation of a new national policy, and a new national army to combat Japanese aggression.

It is not yet clear exactly what prompted C.R. to take this stand, but certain facts may be noted. For one thing, Madras is a coastal province directly menaced by Japan, and it is natural that he should be primarily concerned with strengthening India's powers of defense. As for his stand on the Moslem question, it is perhaps significant that Madras is virtually 100% Hindu, with no "communal" problem, and no direct experience with the real nature of the communalist agitation of the Moslem League. Rajagopalacharia's action may also have been inspired by a belief that Gandhi's control over the nationalist movement was weakening, and that the time was ripe for someone to take a more positive and constructive stand with regard to Indian defense. Finally, it is perhaps relevant to note that the British Government played up the Madras resolution enthusiastically, and in the light of British skill in handling the Indian problem in the past, Rajagopalacharia may be destined to play a more prominent role than he has heretofore.

PART II



INDIA BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

CHAPTER I



TRANSFORMATION OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY

PRIOR to the British conquest, the economic structure of India was based on agriculture combined with handicraft industries. Indian handicrafts had attained a high level of development, Indian silk and cotton textiles occupied an important place in world commerce, and India could boast of a number of flourishing commercial and manufacturing centers. In general, however, India's was predominantly a "village economy" made up of small, isolated peasant communities, whose inhabitants held their land in common, and supported local craftsmen and artisans to supply their simple needs for manufactured goods. These village units were practically self-sufficing and also self-perpetuating, for when the population of any village grew too large, a new village organized on the same pattern was established on unoccupied land. Since communication facilities were poor or wholly lacking, there was very little exchange of commodities or social contact between these scattered communities. Remaining relatively untouched by the wars of rival

dynasties and the invasions of foreign conquerors, the Indian people took no interest in political affairs and submitted unquestioningly to the rule of a completely despotic government.

The foundations of this traditional economy which, though stable and relatively self-sufficing, was also primitive, static, and parochial, were finally shattered by the impact of the industrial capitalist system of the west, represented by Great Britain. All previous conquerors of India had been content to settle in India and to leave the economy of the country unchanged. The British conquest was a radical change, for the British remained rulers from afar, and also were primarily concerned in altering the Indian economic structure to suit the needs of England's new industrial economy.

It is sometimes forgotten that the conquest of India made possible the rapid growth of an industrialized economy in England. For it was the vast amounts of tribute extracted from India by the British East India Company during the latter half of the 18th century that provided the capital needed to utilize the great series of mechanical inventions which launched the industrial revolution. The colorful and frequently lurid history of the East India Company's activities has been told too often to require detailed discussion here, but it is important to note that the character of the Company's exploitation of India was very different from the subsequent aims of British policy.[1] To the merchant capitalists represented in the Company, the important thing

[1] For a detailed history of the activities of the East India Company, the reader is referred to the excellent study by Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India.* Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1934.

was not to secure a market for British goods, but rather to monopolize the trade in the products of India and the East Indies, particularly the spices, fine cottons, and rich silks which could be sold at great profit in England and Europe. Their chief concern was therefore to find something which could be offered India in exchange, and to secure the maximum of Indian products for the minimum payment.

For a time this problem had to be solved by the export of gold and silver from England, but after the battle of Plassey (1757) and the conquest of Bengal, the collection and administration of Indian revenues passed into the Company's hands. This not only enabled the Company to pay for Indian products with funds collected in India, but also opened up immense opportunities for direct plunder. An indication of the results achieved is found in the statement of the revenues and expenditures of Bengal during the first six years of the Company's administration, as reported to the British Parliament in 1775. Total net revenue collected was approximately £13 million; total expenditure £9 million; and the balance of £4 million was remitted as "clear gain" to England.

To meet the insatiable demands of the Company for bigger and better profits, the land taxes were raised to new heights, made payable in money instead of in kind, and rigorously exacted. At the same time, the all-important irrigation and other public works traditionally maintained by the State were allowed to fall into disrepair, with the result that those parts of the country under the Company's control were rapidly impoverished. In 1769, the Company's resident at Murshidabad reported that "it must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think that since the

accession of the Company to the *Dewani* [civil administration] the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before, and yet I am afraid the fact is undoubted . . . I well remember this country when trade was free and the flourishing state it was then in; with concern I now see its present ruinous condition, which I am convinced is greatly owing to the monopoly that has been made of late years in the Company's name of almost all the manufactures in the country."

In 1770, this "ruinous condition" was demonstrated by a famine in Bengal in which some ten million people died. Yet land revenue was not only collected throughout the famine, but was actually increased. "Notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the province," wrote Governor Warren Hastings in 1772, "the net collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768. . . . It was naturally to be expected that the diminution of the revenue should have kept an equal pace with the other consequences of so great a calamity. That it did not was owing to its being violently kept up to its former standard."

The tremendous contribution which the treasure extracted from India made to the industrial revolution in England was vividly described by Brooks Adams in his "The Law of Civilization and Decay" as follows:

"The influx of Indian treasure, by adding considerably to the nation's cash capital, not only increased its stock of energy, but added much to its flexibility and the rapidity of its movement. Very soon after Plassey, the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous; for all authorities agree that the 'industrial revolution' began with the year 1770. . . .

"Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed. In 1760 the flying shuttle appeared, and coal began to replace wood in smelting. In 1764, Hargreaves invented the spinning jenney, in 1776 Crompton contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the power loom, and in 1768 Watt matured the steam engine . . . But, though these machines served as outlets for the accelerating movements of the time, they did not cause that acceleration. In themselves inventions are passive, . . . waiting for a sufficient store of force to have accumulated to set them working. That store must always take the shape of money, and money not hoarded but in motion. Before the influx of the Indian treasure, and the expansion of credit which followed, no force sufficient for this purpose existed . . . Possibly since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder, because for nearly fifty years Great Britain stood without a competitor." [2]

With the industrial revolution, however, new industrial and financial interests rose to power in England, whose chief concern was to find expanding markets for the greatly increased volume of British manufactured goods. This new class of industrial capitalists wanted a complete change in British economic policy toward India. They wanted Indian products kept out of the British market and the Indian market opened up for British goods, and they therefore set about to terminate the East India Company's monopolistic and corrupt administration. The India Act of 1784 established the principle of more direct control by the British Government over the Company's activities; in 1786 Lord Cornwallis was sent out as Governor-General to carry through drastic changes in administration; and in 1788, Warren

[2] Brooks Adams, *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928, pp. 259-60.

Hastings who had served as Governor and Governor-General from 1772 to 1785 was impeached by Parliament for corruption and misgovernment. By 1813, the East India Company's monopoly of the Indian trade had been terminated, and the British Government had assumed a considerable degree of supervision over the administration of the British-controlled areas in India, although the final transfer of the Company's political power to the British Crown did not take place until 1858.

The Indian Land System

One of the most important actions of the early British rulers of India was the transformation of the traditional Indian land system, under which the land was owned jointly by the village community, and the State or local ruler was paid a proportion of the year's produce. At the time of the British conquest, the Mogul Empire was in the process of disruption, and independent feudal princes and former government tax collectors were levying extortionate tribute from the peasants, but the village community system was still in force, and the "king's share," or government revenue, was still a percentage of the year's crop, not a fixed money payment on the basis of land-ownership, irrespective of the size of the crop.

The officials of the East India Company, however, had no interest in collecting revenues in kind; they wanted a cash revenue which could be definitely determined in advance. As they extended their control in India, therefore, they adopted the traditional land basis of revenue, but introduced the system of fixed money payments from indi-

vidual land-holders. The English landlord system, individual ownership of land, the rights of mortgage, foreclosure, and sale of land, and other English legal concepts for which there was no previous equivalent in India, were introduced and administered by an English bureaucracy which combined legislative, executive, and judicial functions. In this way, the traditional land system was completely transformed, and both the administrative and the economic functions of the village community were destroyed. The British authorities in India in reality assumed the ultimate possession of the land, either by making the peasants the equivalent of Government tenants who could be deprived of their holdings for failure to pay the land tax or rent, or by alienating the land to landlords who held their titles from the Government and who could also be ejected for failure to pay their land tax.

The first type of land settlement attempted by the British was a modified form of the landlord system—the famous Permanent Land Settlement of 1793 for Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, which was later extended to some parts of northern Madras. Under this Settlement, the *Zemindars*, i.e. officials appointed by the previous rulers to collect land revenue on commission, were made landlords in perpetuity, subject to a permanent fixed payment to the Government, which was calculated at the rate of ten-elevenths of the total payments of the peasantry, the remaining one-eleventh being the share of the landlord. At the time of the Settlement, these terms were extremely hard on the peasants and the *Zemindars*, and very profitable for the Government, since the sum of £3 million to be raised for the Government in Bengal was more than three times the amount of revenue

collected under its previous rulers. Many of the old *Zemindar* families were unable to meet these payments, and were sold out, their estates being bought up by a new class of landed proprietors with a more ruthless approach to the problem of extracting payment from the peasants. In time, however, the system worked in a way that had not been anticipated, for with the fall in the value of money and the increase in the revenues extracted from the peasantry, the Government's share, which was permanently fixed at £3 million, became relatively smaller while that of the *Zemindars* greatly increased. Today the total rents legally exacted in Bengal are estimated to total about £12 million, of which only one-fourth goes to the Government.

In recent years, the Permanent Settlement has been vigorously condemned not only by the Indian people but also by many British writers, some of whom offer the explanation that the Settlement was a mistake made in ignorance of the fact that the *Zemindars* were not really land-owners. Statements of officials at the time, however, indicate that the British authorities were perfectly aware that they were creating a new class of landlords, and of their reasons for doing so. There seems to be no doubt that one of the chief aims of the *Zemindari* settlement was to strengthen British control in India, through the creation of a new social class whose interests would be bound up with the maintenance of British rule. This aim is stated with great clarity, for example, in a speech by Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of India from 1828 to 1835: "If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other re-

spects, has this great advantage at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people." [8] The major mistake of the Permanent Settlement, however, was not repeated. Subsequent *Zemindari* settlements were made "temporary," i.e., subject to periodic revision to permit of successive increases in the amount to be paid the Government.

In the early 19th century, an alternative system of land settlement was introduced in other parts of India, under which the Government made a direct settlement with the peasant cultivators, subject to periodic re-assessment. This is known as the *Ryotwari* system, and was first put into effect by Sir Thomas Munro as Governor of Madras in 1820, and subsequently adopted in other provinces. It now applies to about half the total area of British India. This system was originally advocated as being a closer approach to traditional Indian institutions, but by making the settlement with individual cultivators instead of with the village community, and by assessing the tax on the basis of landownership rather than a proportion of the actual crop, it ran counter to the old Indian land system no less than the *Zemindari* settlements. In actual practice, moreover, through the process of subletting, the dispossession of peasants by money-lenders, etc., landlordism has spread widely in the *Ryotwari* areas. As one Indian writer puts it, "The *Ryotwari* districts have long ago lost what slight resemblance to that system they ever possessed. Between the cultivating peasant and the State there

[8] Speech of November 8, 1829, reprinted in A. B. Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy, 1750-1921*, Vol. I, p. 215.

has grown up a whole hierarchy of intermediaries, money-lenders, and merchants, rich farmers and landlords." [4]

Opening Up the Indian Market

From 1813 onward, British economic policy toward India was dictated largely by the rising industrialist class, and was designed primarily to expand the Indian market for British manufactures and also to increase India's production of raw materials needed by British industry. One-way "free trade" was imposed on India by granting British products virtual free entry into the Indian market while high tariffs were raised against Indian manufactures entering England. Between 1813 and 1835, English cotton textile exports to India increased from less than one million to 51 million yards, while exports of Indian cotton goods to England declined from 1,250,000 to 306,000 pieces. By 1850, India which for centuries had exported cotton goods to the whole world, was importing one-fourth of Britain's cotton textile exports. Machine-made cotton goods from England destroyed the Indian hand-weaving industry, and machine-made yarn wiped out the spinners. Other Indian handicraft industries suffered the same fate, notably the manufacture of silk and woollen textiles, iron, pottery, glass, and paper. The basis of the traditional Indian economy in which farming was supplemented by domestic industry was thus destroyed, along with the decline of such prosperous manufacturing centers as Surat and Dacca. And since there was no compensating growth of modern industries to provide alternative opportunities for

[4] K. B. Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1939, p. 58.

employment, millions of artisans and craftsmen from both towns and villages were forced to fall back on agriculture as their sole means of survival.

"Less than a hundred years ago," wrote Sir Henry Cotton in 1890, "the commerce of Dacca was estimated at one crore (ten million) rupees and its population at 200,000 souls. In 1787 the exports of Dacca muslin to England amounted to 30 lakhs (three million) rupees; in 1817 they had ceased altogether. The arts of spinning and weaving, which for ages afforded employment to a numerous and industrial population, have now become extinct. Families which were formerly in a state of affluence have been driven to desert the towns and betake themselves to the villages for a livelihood. . . . This decadence has occurred not in Dacca only . . . the manufacturing classes in all parts of the country are becoming impoverished."

India was thus rapidly transformed from a country of combined agriculture and handicrafts into a purely agricultural colony of British industry, resulting in the severe overpressure on agriculture which has remained one of the most critical problems of modern India. There were some in England who criticized this transformation of the Indian economy. Montgomery Martin, the early historian of the British Empire, warned the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1840 that "India is as much a manufacturing country as an agricultural; and he who would seek to reduce her to the position of an agricultural country, seeks to lower her in the scale of civilization." But British manufacturers had their own ideas about India's economic development. Thomas Bazley, president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, told the same Parliamentary Enquiry that "in India there is an im-

mense extent of territory, and the population of it would consume British manufactures to a most enormous extent. The whole question with respect to the Indian trade is whether they can pay us, by the products of their soil, for what we are prepared to send out as manufactures." In other words, the Indian market for British goods had to be developed and to do this it was necessary both to curtail Indian manufacturing industries and to expand India's production and export of raw materials.

These aims governed British economic policy towards India throughout the 19th century, and their achievement required the construction of an extensive network of railways, the development of roads and ports, the establishment of postal and telegraph services, renewed attention to irrigation projects, the introduction of an English system of education to train the necessary clerks and subordinate members of the civil service, and the establishment of a western-style banking system through which Government and private foreign banks controlled India's finances, commerce, and industry. British capital was invested not only in railways, but in plantations, mines, and jute mills to increase the export of raw materials and foodstuffs, and by 1900 India had become a great exporter of rice, wheat, cotton, jute, tea, oil-seeds, etc., and a large-scale importer of manufactured goods, especially cotton textiles, iron and steel products, railway equipment, and machinery.

Opening up the Indian market also led to a rapid increase in the size of the Indian public debt—the nucleus of British capital investment in India. When the British Government took over direct control of India in 1858, they assumed a

debt of £70 million incurred by the East India Company, much of which represented the cost of suppressing the Mutiny of 1857, and of wars and military expeditions against Afghanistan, Persia, China, Burma, and elsewhere. In addition, the Company was compensated by the British Parliament for allowing itself to be abolished, and this expense was also charged to the Indian tax-payer. The Government of India thus started its career with a debt of £112 million, which rose to £224 million by 1900, and to £274 million by 1914. A substantial part of this increase (estimated at about £65 million) was incurred to meet the cost of wars outside India.[5] And the debt was further enhanced by the policy of debiting India for every expense even remotely connected with the maintenance of British rule. India was charged, for example, for the costs of a reception given the Sultan of Turkey in London, for the maintenance of British diplomatic and consular establishments in China and Persia, for the entire cost of a telegraph line from England to India, and for part of the permanent expenses of the British Mediterranean fleet. The system first adopted for financing railway construction also went to increase the Indian debt to Britain. The British Government of India guaranteed 5% interest on all private capital invested in Indian railways, a policy which naturally encouraged extravagant expenditure. The first 6,000 miles, built up to 1872, cost £100 million, or over £16,000 a mile. "Enormous sums were lavished," reported the former Finance Minister in India, W. N. Massey, to the

[5] Among the wars and military expeditions for which the Indian people had to pay were: the Bhutan War of 1863, the Abyssinian Expedition of 1867, the Perak Expedition of 1875, the Afghan War of 1879-81, and the Burmese War of 1886.

Parliamentary Enquiry on Indian Finance in 1872, "and the contractors had no motive whatever for economy. All the money came from the English capitalist, and so long as he was guaranteed five per cent on the revenues of India, it was immaterial to him whether the funds he lent were thrown into the Hooghly or converted into bricks and mortar. . . . It seems to me that they are the most extravagant works ever built."

But though the development of India as a market for British goods and a source of raw materials was accomplished at great cost to the Indian tax-payer and meant ruin for many Indian handicraft industries, it also performed a vital, constructive role. India was more unified politically than ever before. She had been given internal law and order, a modern system of communications and transport, and an efficient, if costly, civil service. The old economic basis of Indian society, which had condemned India's millions to a stagnant, primitive existence, bound by the rigidities of caste and denied all hope of social progress, had been destroyed and the material basis laid for a new and more progressive economic development. For the introduction of the communications system, particularly the railways, had necessitated the establishment of railway workshops, the opening up of coal mines and iron smelters, and the training of mechanics and administrative personnel and thus paved the way for the development of modern, mechanized industries.

Prior to the First World War, however, British capital investment was in no way concerned with promoting Indian industrialization. In 1911, Sir George Paish estimated that British capital investments in India were distributed as follows:

	£ million
Government and municipal	182.5
Railways	136.5
Plantations (tea, coffee, rubber)	24.2
Tramways	4.1
Mines	3.5
Banks	3.4
Oil	3.2
Commercial and Industrial	2.5
Finance, Land and Investment	1.8
Miscellaneous	3.3
	365.0

In other words, more than 90% of the total investment was devoted to administration, finance, transport, and the production of raw materials, that is to purposes auxiliary to the development of India as an agricultural colony of British industry. British authorities were openly opposed to any industrial development in India, their attitude being much the same as that which characterized British policy toward America before the American Revolution, when the building of steel mills in the American colonies was strictly forbidden. The Government Annual Report for 1921, for example, states that "some time prior to the war, certain attempts to encourage Indian industries by means of pioneer factories and Government subsidies were effectively discouraged from Whitehall." This official opposition was more concretely expressed in a tariff policy designed to limit the growth of the Indian cotton textile industry which had begun to expand rapidly in the latter part of the 19th century, and which was the only important industrial enterprise in which Indian capital predominated. Import duties on British cotton goods were removed in 1882, and a 5% duty imposed on imported

textile machinery. When, in 1894, financial requirements necessitated the renewal of import duties on cotton cloth, an excise tax of 3½%, equal to the import duty, was imposed on all Indian mill-woven cloth. This excise duty remained in full force until 1917, when its effect was partially mitigated by the raising of the import duty to 7½%, and was not abolished entirely until 1925.

Under these conditions, the development of modern industrial enterprises in British India up to 1914 was extremely slow, being limited chiefly to cotton textile mills, both Indian and British controlled, and jute mills in which British capital predominated. The engineering industry was confined to railway workshops. There was no production of machinery, and the iron and steel industry was in its infancy; the first iron smelting furnaces of the Tata Iron and Steel Company being blown in in 1911. In 1914, the number of workers in "organized" industry, i.e., shops employing 20 or more workers and coming under the Factories Act, was only 951,000, out of a total working population of nearly 150,000,000.

Thus, the British can rightly claim that they gave India the beginnings of the material equipment necessary for the development of a modern economic structure, and performed a valuable service in breaking down the static and backward village economy which had condemned so many millions of Indians to a stagnant and primitive existence. But it is equally true that India's development was artificially arrested when it reached a point where it threatened the interests of British industry and finance, and that India was not allowed to continue her natural progress toward a modern industrialized economy. No one can deny the vital and con-

structive role played by Britain in laying the foundations for India's material progress in the modern world, but the fact remains that the British did not complete their work. They destroyed the foundations of the old self-sufficient economy, but were unwilling to complete the construction of a new one to take its place. By reducing India "to the position of an agricultural country," they did, in fact, "lower her in the scale of civilization," by lowering her relative material welfare in comparison with other industrial nations.

CHAPTER II



THE BEGINNINGS OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

DESPITE the limited and one-sided character of Indian economic development in the 19th century, the introduction of modern industrial techniques, the expansion of foreign trade, and the spread of western ideas of industry and finance, inevitably led to the rise of a new class of Indian industrialists. Simultaneously, the system of English education, introduced to train the necessary Indian personnel for subordinate administrative and commercial positions, resulted in the emergence of a new educated class of lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc., who had been taught the democratic concepts of self-government and civil liberties practiced in western countries. This new class of industrialists and intellectuals, though they owed their opportunities and aspirations largely to the accomplishments of British rule, soon came to recognize that the British Government and British industrial interests constituted the major obstacle in the way of India's further advance toward both economic and political freedom. And it was this class which first gave

articulate expression to Indian nationalist demands through the Indian National Congress.

The Indian National Congress was brought into existence in 1885 through the initiative and under the guidance of an Englishman, Mr. A. O. Hume, according to a plan pre-arranged with the Viceroy. It was intended not only to divert the aspirations of the intellectuals but also to combat the rising forces of popular discontent and anti-British feeling. Mr. Hume had been an Indian Civil Servant up to 1882, and in his official capacity had access to the secret police reports which revealed an alarming growth of popular unrest. The period of the 70's was marked by a number of severe famines and acute distress among the peasantry, as well as by increasing bitterness among the educated classes against the British Government. This unrest was first met with repression. The freedom of the press was removed by the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, and in 1879 the Arms Act made it a severe penal offense for an Indian civilian to possess a gun or other weapon. When the potential revolutionary movement had been quelled, however, it was thought advisable to form a legal movement under safe leadership as a further means of counteracting the growing discontent. Thus when Hume suggested to the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, that it might be useful to have an annual meeting of Indian leaders to discuss social problems, Lord Dufferin proposed that such a body might well perform the political functions of a "Loyal Opposition."

Hume's own conception of the role of the Congress was that "a safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own action, was urgently needed and no more efficacious safety-valve than our Congress

movement could possibly be devised." Lord Dufferin himself appears to have regarded the Congress as an excellent way to build up Indian support for the Government by separating the "loyalist" elements from the "extremists." In a speech on the demands of the Indian educated classes, made in 1886, he declared that: "Putting aside the demands of the extremists . . . the objects even of the more advanced party are neither very dangerous nor very extravagant . . . Amongst the natives I have met there are a considerable number who are both able and sensible, and upon whose loyal cooperation one could undoubtedly rely. The fact of their supporting the Government would popularize many of its acts which now have the appearance of being driven through the legislature by force; and if they in their turn had a native party behind them, the Government of India would cease to stand up, as it does now, an isolated rock in the middle of a tempestuous sea, around whose base the breakers dash themselves simultaneously from all the four quarters of the heavens."

During the early years of its existence, the Indian National Congress adhered to the moderate, loyalist lines expected by its founders, its chief demand being for larger Indian representation in the legislative councils and the civil service. The attitude of these early moderate leaders of Congress was ably stated by R. C. Dutt, president of Congress in 1890, as follows: "The people of India . . . desire to strengthen the present Government and to bring it more in touch with the people. They desire to see some Indian members in the Secretary of State's Council, and in the Viceroy's Executive Council, representing Indian agriculture and industries. They wish to see Indian members in an Executive

Council for each Province. . . . They seek that the administration of the Empire and its great provinces should be conducted with the cooperation of the people . . ." [1]

These early Congress leaders had no thought of challenging British rule. On the contrary, they looked to the British Government for help in combatting what they considered the major problems facing India—the abysmal backwardness, ignorance, and poverty of the people, the lack of modern economic and technical development, and the "unrepresentative" character of the bureaucratic system of government. "The educated classes," declared the President of the Congress in 1898, "are the friends and not the foes of England—her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her." Congress leaders worked hard to promote social reforms, the spread of modern education, and the development of modern industries. But their hope that the British Government would cooperate with them in this progressive program was not realized. The British authorities in India soon perceived that no matter how moderate or loyal the Congress leadership might be, it was becoming the focal point for Indian nationalist aspirations which in time would challenge Britain's right to control India's development in the interests of England. Thus within a few years of its founding, the Congress was being regarded with suspicion by the Government as a center of "sedition," and by 1900, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, was writing to the Secretary of State for India that "the Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."

[1] Romesh Chandra Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, Vol. I, "India Under Early British Rule," London, 1901, p. xviii.

This sharp change in the official attitude toward the Congress was the result of the growing strength of a new and more militant nationalism among certain sections of the educated Indian middle class—the students, intellectuals, and professional workers who were becoming increasingly discontented with the lack of opportunities open to them under British rule. At that time, there was very limited scope for the thousands of graduates turned out each year by the schools and universities. The best and most influential posts in the civil service were reserved for Englishmen, there were few openings in industry, and a large proportion of these young graduates turned to law as a profession. Soon the number of lawyers greatly exceeded the amount of legal business, and many of them turned to politics to occupy themselves. The only other occupation open to the English-speaking educated Indian was employment as a clerk in English or Indian firms or government offices, but here again the supply of clerks greatly exceeded the demand and wages were appallingly low.

This economic discontent found expression in extreme nationalism, and sharp criticism of the weak, conciliatory policy of the older Moderate leaders. Under the leadership of B. G. Tilak, a brilliant Poona Brahman, these unemployed or ill-paid intellectuals organized themselves into a new party, called the Nationalists, which soon came to be known as "Extremists" in contrast to the older "Moderate" leaders who favored cooperation with Britain. These two schools of thought were in no sense comparable to a conservative right-wing and a radical left-wing, however, for though the Extremists advocated a policy of uncompromising struggle against British rule, their political and social philosophy was

decidedly reactionary. In their view, the ineffectiveness of the Moderates was the result of the latter's "denationalized" and "Westernized" attitude, and their disappointment at the meager rewards offered for acquiring Western culture led them to demand the revival of the ancient culture of Hinduism.

Thus they attacked the most progressive features of the Moderates' program and endeavored to build a nationalist movement on the basis of a revival of the ancient Hindu glories of the past. This marked the beginning of that disastrous combination of political nationalism with the most reactionary forces of orthodox Hinduism which was to exercise such a powerful and detrimental effect on the Indian nationalist movement. For the insistence on religion and religious superstitions as the basis of the nationalist movement inevitably weakened and retarded the growth of genuine political consciousness among the Indian people, while the emphasis on Hinduism served to alienate large numbers of the Moslem community from the national movement.

The theories of these early Extremists deserve special attention because they reappear in a more subtle form in Gandhi's political and social doctrines, e.g., his advocacy of the return to the spinning wheel and the primitive life of the village community, his opposition to all forms of western science and industry, and his constant interweaving of politics and religion. In essence, the Extremists' philosophy maintained that India would gain freedom not by social progress and the elimination of the ancient caste divisions and other harmful traditions, but by social retrogression and the revival of an antiquated social structure completely at variance with modern economic and political conditions.

Thus, "these militant national leaders of the people, devoted and fearless as many of them were, who should have been leading the people forward along the path of emancipation and understanding, away from all the evil relics of the past, appeared instead in practice as the champions of social reaction and superstition, of caste division and privilege, . . . seeking to hold down the antiquated pre-British social and ideological fetters upon the people in the name of a high-flown mystical 'national' appeal." [2]

This policy not only weakened but divided the national movement, because the reactionary character of the Extremists' social philosophy alienated many who would otherwise have welcomed a vigorous nationalist program. A typical case was that of Motilal Nehru, one of the ablest of the Moderate leaders, of whom his son writes:

"A man of strong feelings, strong passions, tremendous pride and great strength of will, he was very far from the moderate type. And yet in 1907 and 1908 and for some years afterwards he was undoubtedly a moderate of the Moderates and he was bitter against the Extremists, though I believe he admired Tilak.

"Why was this so? . . . His clear thinking led him to see that hard and extreme words lead nowhere unless they are followed by action appropriate to the language. He saw no effective action in prospect . . . And then the background of these movements was a religious nationalism which was alien to his nature. He did not look back to a revival in India of ancient times. He had no sympathy or understanding of them, and utterly disliked many old social customs, caste and the like, which he considered reactionary. He looked to the West and felt greatly attracted by Western progress, and thought that this could come through an association with England." [3]

[2] R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, Victor Gollanz Ltd., London, 1940, p. 294.
[3] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom*, p. 36.

The First Wave of Nationalist Struggle, 1905-1909

1905 marked the beginning of the first wave of nationalist activity in India, a movement which coincided with the rise of nationalist aspirations throughout Asia after Japan's defeat of Tsarist Russia, the first Asiatic victory over a Western imperialist power. In India, the immediate issue which precipitated the struggle was the Partition of Bengal, a plan devised by Lord Curzon and carried out under his successor, Lord Minto. At that time, Bengal was the center of revolutionary political activity in India, and the decision to create a new province in Eastern Bengal in which the Moslems would form a clear majority of the population, was deeply resented by the educated middle class (predominantly Hindu) on the grounds that it was designed to weaken political activity and subject nationalist Hindus to Moslem control. In protest, a boycott of foreign goods was proclaimed on August 7, 1905, and there was a rapid spread of revolutionary and terrorist activity in Bengal. The Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, dominated by the Extremists, adopted a new four-point program: *Swaraj* or self-government, defined as "the system of government obtaining in the self-governing British colonies"; support of the boycott; support of *Swadeshi*, i.e. the promotion of indigenous industries; and national education.

The Moderates in the Congress, however, under the leadership of G. K. Gokhale, grew increasingly alarmed at the violent terrorist methods of political agitation employed by the Extremists in Bengal. And at the Surat Congress in 1907, there was a sharp split between the two groups, the Moderates holding out for a program of gradual political reform

leading to the eventual establishment of responsible parliamentary government, while the Extremists demanded violent revolutionary action to win complete independence. Gokhale and his followers prevailed, and Tilak and other Extremists left the Congress.

The British authorities in India met the rising nationalist movement with the usual formula of repression followed by conciliatory moves to win the support of the Moderates. A Seditious Meetings Act was passed in 1907, and a new and more drastic Press Act followed in 1910. In 1908, Tilak was sentenced to six years imprisonment, and many other Extremists leaders were either imprisoned or deported. Throughout this period, however, proposals for political reform which Lord Minto considered "the natural correlative to the repression of violence," had been under debate between Minto and Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, and these were finally embodied in the India Councils Act of 1909, commonly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms.

The Reforms of 1909 extended the system of representation initiated in the Indian Councils Act of 1892, by permitting a minority of indirectly elected members in the Central Legislative Assembly, and a majority of indirectly elected members in the Provincial Assemblies. The size of the legislative councils was increased, and they were authorized to adopt resolutions on matters of administrative and financial policy. Lord Morley believed that it was unnecessary to retain a majority of officially appointed members in the provincial legislative assemblies, in view of the unrestricted veto powers of the Provincial Governors, but he was not prepared to extend this argument to the Central Legislative Assembly.

The essential condition of "liberalizing" the provincial councils was "that the imperial supremacy shall be in no degree compromised." The Government of India, he held, must always be so constituted as to be able to carry out the orders, executive or legislative, which it might receive from Whitehall. "I am convinced," he wrote, "that a permanent official majority . . is absolutely essential." [4]

The most important feature of the Morley-Minto Reforms, however, was the contribution of Lord Minto, whose chief concern was to enlist the support of the conservative and loyal sections of the Indian upper classes by associating them in the government. "The only way we can save India from a tremendous convulsion," he declared, "is in recognizing the right of the Indian gentlemen, loyal at the present moment, to a greater share in the government of the country." Minto was disturbed by the heavy representation of urban and professional interests in the legislative councils. As he explained to the Central Legislature, the British Government did not deny that "the professional classes are entitled to a share of representation proportioned not merely to their numbers, which are small, but to their influence, which is large and tends continually to increase. But they are not prepared to allow them a virtual monopoly of the power exercised by the councils, and they believe that the soundest solution of the problem is to be found in supplying the requisite counterpoise to their excessive influence by creating an additional electorate recruited from the landed and moneyed classes." [5]

Minto's aim was to bring into political activity the more

[4] *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934, p. 884.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 879.

conservative elements in Indian society which could be expected to serve as a counterweight to the political views of the National Congress. One of the best groups for this purpose was the newly developing class of educated Moslems who had taken to western education much later than the Hindus, and who resented the Hindus' monopoly of the best government positions and their dominance in political affairs. It was no mere coincidence that the All-India Moslem League was founded with official British blessing in 1906. In that year, a deputation of wealthy Moslem landowners, merchants, and lawyers, headed by the Aga Khan, petitioned the Viceroy to give separate electorates and special representation to the Moslems under any electoral system that might be set up. Lord Minto immediately agreed, telling the deputation that "you justly claim that your position should be estimated, not merely on your numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service that it has rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you." This deputation was the nucleus from which the Moslem League was subsequently formed. Nationalist Moslems later claimed that the deputation had been a "command performance" arranged by the Government, and a letter from Morley to Minto in December 1909, certainly suggested that the plan had originated with the Viceroy. "I won't follow you again into our Mohametan dispute," wrote Lord Morley, "only I respectfully remind you once more that it was *your* early speech about their extra claims that first started the M. [Moslem] hare."

The 1909 Reforms thus marked the first official recognition of the theory of "communal" representation. Prior to that time, the feudal landlords, the princes, and the conserva-

tive mercantile interests had been considered as valuable counterweights to the professional and industrial interests represented in the Congress, but these divisions had not been based on religious grounds. It was Lord Minto's special contribution that he extended the principle of counterpoise to religious communities.[6]

The Moderate leaders, who were now in control of the Indian National Congress, sharply criticized the creation of separate communal electorates as an attempt to "set one religion against another, and thus to create a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class." They argued that representation on a religious basis "was calculated to accentuate differences which are fast losing their importance in secular affairs, and interfere with the growth of a sentiment of unity among the people which was a necessary condition of progress." Nevertheless, they accepted the Reforms as a substantial step forward in the process of associating Indians in the government of the country, and proclaimed their loyalty to the Government. In 1911, when the revision of the Partition of Bengal was announced, the spokesman of the Congress declared that "every heart is beating in unison with reverence and devotion to the British Throne, overflowing with revived confidence in and gratitude toward British statesmanship." After 1911, the nationalist struggle subsided, and the Congress pursued a policy of loyal cooperation with the British Government which endured throughout the First World War. Nevertheless, the Extremists had left their mark on the Indian nationalist movement, and it

[6] For a detailed discussion of the origins of communal representation, extensively documented from the correspondence between Minto and Morley, the reader is referred to K. B. Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1939.

never again returned to the unquestioning loyalty and submission of the years before 1905. The seed of the demand for greater political freedom had been planted, and was destined to flower into a new and more vigorous wave of nationalist activity in the years immediately following the war of 1914-18.

Britain and Indian Self-Government

In recent years, many British statements on the Indian problem have credited Britain with fostering the rise of Indian nationalism, and have insisted that the ultimate goal of British policy has always been to train the Indian people for self-government. It would seem, however, that this was decidedly not the view of the earlier British rulers of India, prior to the time when the growing strength of the Indian nationalist movement made self-government a political issue which could not be ignored. Lord Halifax, in his speech of April 7, 1942 to which we have already referred, described "the great Act of 1833, which asserted for India the principle of equal status for all British subjects, the Councils Acts of 1861 and 1892, which introduced representation and popular election, and the Reforms of 1909, which increased the size and widened the scope of all representative bodies," as important steps in India's steady political progress from dependence to autonomy.

But regarding the pledge of equal status for all British subjects, contained in the Charter of 1833 and repeated in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, we have the famous words of Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India in 1876-80, in his "confidential" letter to the Secretary of State for India: "We

all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We had the choice between prohibiting them and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straightforward course . . . I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and of India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they have uttered to the ear."[7] And with regard to the Morley-Minto Reforms, we find Lord Morley declaring that "if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it." (Speech in the House of Lords, December 17, 1908.)

The real aim and effect of these early constitutional reform measures, repeatedly stressed in the official statements and correspondence between the various Viceroys and Secretaries of State, was the gradual extension of carefully controlled Indian participation in the British administrative system, with a view to enlisting Indian support of British rule. Lord Morley made this clear in a speech in the House of Lords on February 23, 1909, in which he declared that "There are three classes of people whom we have to consider in dealing with a scheme of this kind. There are the Extremists who nurse fantastic dreams that some day they will drive us out of India . . . The second group nourish no hope of this sort, but hope for autonomy or self-government of the colonial species and pattern. And then the third section who ask for no more than to be admitted to cooperation in our administration. I believe the effect of the Reforms

[7] Quoted by G. T. Garrett, *An Indian Commentary*, p. 101.

has been, is being, and will be to draw the second class, who hope for colonial autonomy, into the third class, who will be content with being admitted to a fair and full cooperation."

Further light is shed on the real purpose of the 1909 Reforms by a letter from Morley to Minto, acknowledging the latter's explanation that there was to be no question of any advance toward representative government in India:

"Your Excellency's disclaimer for your government of being 'advocates of representative government for India' is not more than was to be expected . . . While repudiating the intention or desire to attempt the transplantation of any European form of representative government to Indian soil, what is sought by Your Excellency in Council is to improve existing machinery, or to find new, for 'recognizing the natural aspirations of educated men to share in the government of their country.' I need not say that in this design you have the cordial concurrence of His Majesty's Government.

"One main standard and test for all who have a share in guiding Indian policy . . . is the effect of whatever new proposal may at any time be made upon the strength and steadiness of the Paramount Power." [8]

It would seem fair to say, therefore, that at least up to the First World War, the professed aim of British policy was not to advance self-government in India, but to extend the participation of the educated and "moneyed" classes in the British-controlled administration, and thereby "rally the Moderates" to counteract the activities and influence of those "Extremists" who had the temerity to dream of complete freedom for India.

[8] Quoted in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918, p. 64.

PART III



INDIA AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

1914-1922

CHAPTER I



WARTIME DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

THE First World War wrought profound changes in India, as in the other colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia. It destroyed once and for all the legend of the inherent superiority of Europe over Asia, and revealed the great importance of India to the Empire, both as a source of manpower and supplies. The war also removed a large proportion of English civilians and military officials from India, thereby giving Indians a greater share in the operation of the administrative machine. Finally, it heightened the political consciousness and self-confidence of the Indian nationalist leaders, who were sure that they, too, would share in the benefits of this fight for freedom and democracy. The Indian Princes and the leaders of Congress alike hastened to declare their loyal cooperation, and India contributed generously to the Allied war effort. More than one million Indian troops served on the battlefields of France, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia. India subscribed $500,000,000 to the Allied war chest, and in addition purchased war loans to the value

of $700,000,000, while finished products valued at $1,250,000,000 were sent to the Allied forces.

The loss of many customary imports, plus the fact that India was called on to aid in equipping Imperial forces, gave a powerful stimulus to industrial production in India. Both British and Indian-owned cotton and jute mills operated at full capacity throughout the war and made enormous profits. The Tata Iron and Steel Company, leader of Indian industrial advance outside the textile field, increased its finished steel production from 19,000 tons in 1913 to 124,000 tons in 1919, and there was a considerable increase in the production of various consumers' goods to make up for the cutting down of imports. It was chiefly the lack of heavy industries to provide the necessary machinery and equipment that prevented any extensive industrial expansion.

The industrial deficiencies revealed by the war brought about a temporary change in the official British attitude toward Indian industrialization, for political as well as economic and strategic reasons. Failure to develop basic heavy industries in India, and the consequent necessity of depending for vital military supplies on the long and precarious overseas route from England, had weakened the whole British strategic position in the Middle East. Moreover, other powers had seized the opportunity provided by the curtailment of British exports to penetrate the Indian market, a development which was felt to be even less desirable than the growth of Indian industries which could at least be subjected to a considerable degree of British financial control. It was also imperative to retain the support of Indian industrialists and other leaders in the war, and certain concessions were considered essential.

As early as November 1915, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, wrote to the Secretary of State for India that "it is becoming increasingly clear that a definite and self-conscious policy of improving the industrial capacity of India will have to be pursued after the war, unless she is to become the dumping ground for the manufactures of foreign nations . . . The attitude of the Indian public towards this question is unanimous, and cannot be left out of account . . . After the war India will consider herself entitled to demand the utmost help which her Government can afford to enable her to take her place, as far as circumstances permit, as a manufacturing country." Similar sentiments were expressed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, issued in August 1918, which stated that "on all grounds a forward policy in industrial development is urgently called for, not merely to give India economic stability, but in order to satisfy the aspirations of her people . . . Both on economic and military grounds, Imperial interests also demand that the natural resources of India should henceforth be better utilized. We cannot measure the access of strength which an industrialized India will bring to the power of the Empire."

In order to encourage Indian industries, a protective tariff system was inaugurated. The duty on cotton piece goods was raised to 7½% in 1917 and to 11% in 1921. The general import duty was raised to 11% in 1921 and to 15% in 1922, and in 1924 the Indian iron and steel industry was granted the protection of a 33⅓% import duty, plus a system of government subsidies. Simultaneously, there was a sharp increase in the volume of private British capital investment in India. The average dividend paid by the leading cotton mills in Bombay in 1920 was 120%, and in some cases was as high

as 250%, while dividends of the larger jute mills averaged 140%. British investors were naturally attracted by these enormous profits and the annual export of British capital to India increased from an estimated £ 15 million in the period 1908-10, or 9% of the total British capital exports, to £ 29 million in 1921 and £ 36 million in 1922, or more than 25% of the total.

New Forces in Indian Politics

The war period also witnessed important developments on the Indian political scene, of which one of the most striking was the growth of Hindu-Moslem unity. The years after 1910 had been notable for the political awakening of the younger generation of Moslems, and their gradual adherence to the Indian nationalist movement, although the older, more conservative elements in the Moslem community continued to remain aloof and proclaim their complete loyalty to the British Government. Revolutions in Turkey and Persia, the Turco-Italian war of 1911, the Balkan wars, and the policies pursued by England and Tsarist Russia in Persia, alarmed the younger Moslems who feared that soon no independent Moslem state would survive. In 1913, there was a split within the Moslem League between the conservative "loyalist" elements and the more nationalist-minded groups who favored an alliance with the Congress. The latter triumphed, the Aga Khan resigned the leadership of the League, and it passed into the hands of younger and more militant leaders. Hitherto, the upperclass Moslems had held aloof from nationalist political agitation. They belonged for the most part to military or landowning families, who were naturally conservative and repelled by the agitational activities of the Hindu

nationalists. But the rising generation of Moslems, many of whom had received a "westernized" education and joined the ranks of the intellectuals and professional workers, soon found that they shared common aims and aspirations with their fellow Hindus. Thus, shortly before the outbreak of the war in 1914, we find the Aga Khan, leader of the ultra-conservative Moslems, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* that one can "take any typical young Mohammedan of the upper middle classes today, and it will be found that, apart from the traditional religion of his family, his education has been entirely on the lines of a Hindu of the same class . . . The men brought up under the new system are coming to the front, and have influenced the increasing approximation of political views and sentiments among educated men of the different communities. This unity is a measure of the growth of Indian nationhood." [1] The conclusions drawn by the Aga Khan are particularly interesting as evidence of the real nature of Moslem "communalism" for he advised the British Government to abandon the policy of separating Hindus from Moslems and to rally the moderates of both creeds in a common camp so as to provide a counterpoise to the radical nationalist tendencies of young India, both Hindu and Moslem—a clear indication that he was more concerned with preventing political changes in India than in protecting the special interests of the Moslem community as a whole.

The growth of nationalist sentiments among the Moslems was given a new stimulus after the outbreak of the war in 1914. Turkey, a Moslem country whose ruler was recog-

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, January 1914, pp. 8-9; quoted by Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y. 1929, pp. 387-8.

nized by most Indian Moslems as the Caliph or spiritual leader of Islam, was allied with Germany, and German-Turkish propaganda agents worked strenuously to promote an Indian Moslem rebellion against the British. Their agitation was not overly successful, but in 1915 the so-called Khilafat movement was launched by certain Indian Moslems, to rally Moslem support for the Turkish Caliph. The leaders of the Indian National Congress, who were eager to win Moslem allies for their political struggle, supported the Khilafat movement despite its wholly religious and reactionary character, and the Moslem League supported the Congress program.

This program took on a new character in 1916. For the first two years of the war, the Congress leaders had enthusiastically supported the British war effort. But as time went on, this enthusiasm turned to disappointment and suspicion, as the British Government showed no sign of contemplating any substantial political concessions to India. Among the people as a whole, the severity of the financial contributions levied for the war, plus the rising prices and reckless profiteering by both Indian and British firms, had created widespread impoverishment and discontent. Nationalist agitation began to revive, and in 1916 the Extremist leader, Tilak, launched a Home Rule for India movement in which he was supported by the English theosophist, Mrs. Annie Besant. This movement attracted a widespread following, and at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in December 1916, Tilak and Mrs. Besant were hailed with tremendous enthusiasm. The older Moderate leaders of the Congress were unable to oppose the rising demand for action, and Tilak and his supporters secured virtually unanimous ac-

ceptance of their Home Rule program.

The Moslem League, under the presidency of Mr. M. A. Jinnah, also adopted the Home Rule program, and a Congress-League Pact was signed at Lucknow, embodying the joint proposals of the two organizations for constitutional reforms leading to the achievement of self-government within the Empire. This plan called for the direct election of four-fifths of all members of the provincial legislatures, and a similar proportion of elected members in the central legislature. The Provincial Governors were to be assisted by Executive Councils, half the members of which would be chosen by the elected members of the legislatures. Resolutions of the legislatures were to be binding unless vetoed by the Governor-in-Council, and in the latter case, when repeated after a fixed interval, were to become law. The Moslems were granted separate electorates, with a proportion of seats considerably in excess of their numerical claims, but were no longer to be free to contest other seats; and any bill or resolution opposed by three-quarters of either the Hindu or Moslem members as injurious to their community was to be dropped. The general aim proclaimed was that India should "become an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions." [2]

[2] The fact that the Congress-League Pact of 1916 recommended the continuation of communal representation was emphasized by the British authorities in both the Montagu-Chelmsford and Simon Reports, as justifying the retention of communal electorates. It may well be argued that from the standpoint of Indian nationalism, the Lucknow Pact made a serious error in accepting as inevitable the communal divisions created by the Morley-Minto Reforms—an error committed in the interests of tactical expediency, to win over the Moslems. But it should also be noted that in the Lucknow Plan, the weighting was to be such as to favor whichever community was in a minority, so that in provinces where the Moslems were a minority, they would receive a slight over-representation, and

The resurgence of Indian nationalist sentiment was further stimulated by the Russian Revolution of March 1917, which brought the issue of national self-determination very much to the forefront of world politics. Confronted with growing Indian unrest, the British Government issued a new Declaration of Policy, read by the Secretary of State for India, Edward Montagu, in the House of Commons on August 20, 1917. The essential portions of this Declaration ran as follows:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible . . . Progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the cooperation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

This statement of policy, known as the Montagu Declaration, is generally described as the keynote of modern British

where, as in Bengal, they were in a majority, they would receive a slight under-representation. In the subsequent British constitutional schemes, however, the Moslems were given over-representation in every case. Thus under the 1935 Act, the Moslems in Bengal, constituting 55% of the population, received 117 seats, while the Hindus, composing 43% of the population, received 78 seats of which 30 were reserved for the "depressed classes." A division according to population, on the same basis as 78 for the Hindus, would have given the Moslems 99 seats.

constitutional policy toward India and as representing a definite shift from the earlier British attitude on the question of Indian self-government. It must be noted, however, that it retained the basic aim of enlisting the cooperation of an ever larger number of Indians in the various branches of the British-controlled administration, and that such cooperation was made the test of India's "sense of responsibility."

The 1919 Constitution

Only after this Declaration had been issued were steps taken to determine what could be done to implement it. Mr. Montagu visited India to confer with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and other officials, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms was issued in August 1918. After lengthy debate in Parliament, the proposed reforms were embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, and only came into operation in 1920, by which time the political situation in India was very different from that of 1917.

The Act of 1919 established in the Provinces of British India the system known as Dyarchy, or the division of government into two parts—responsible and non-responsible. Certain departments, such as Public Health, Education, etc. were "transferred" to Indian Ministers responsible to the Provincial Legislatures, while the more important departments of Finance, Police, etc. were "reserved" in the hands of British Ministers responsible only to the Governor. Complete veto power was retained by the Provincial Governors, who were also empowered to "certify" legislation that they wished passed. The Provincial Legislatures were established

with a majority of elected members, on the basis of a restricted property franchise representing about 3% of the population, while the system of "communal" representation introduced in the Reforms of 1909 was retained and expanded, separate representation being provided for Moslems, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Depressed Classes, Europeans, Commerce and Industry, Universities, and Labor.

CHAPTER II



GANDHI'S RISE AS A NATIONAL LEADER

THE most important event in Indian political history during the years immediately following the War, however, was Gandhi's rise to power as the leader of the Indian National Congress and its conversion into a mass movement with a new technique of mass action, namely "non-violent non-cooperation" or civil disobedience. Gandhi had returned to India in 1914 from South Africa, where he had won a great reputation for his activities in defense of Indian rights and had already experimented with the methods of passive resistance. For two years after his return, he devoted himself chiefly to travel and social work among the Indian peasants, and to perfecting plans for the "spiritual regeneration" of his countrymen. In 1915 he founded his *ashram* or *Satyagraha* colony near Ahmedabad, devoted to poverty and the law of love. *Satyagraha* is a word which defies exact definition. Gandhi invented it, and "soul force" or "force of truth" is the usual translation. Subsequently, it was used to indicate

"non-cooperation," "passive resistance" or "civil disobedience." Gandhi's efforts to improve the lot of the poorest peasants, his doctrine of complete simplicity and poverty, and his semi-mystical, religious teachings immediately attracted the Indian peasantry, hitherto unmoved by the western-educated, urban leaders of the nationalist movement. His doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-violence was true to the teachings of the ancient Hindu religion. His clothing, food, and manner of living all coincided with those of the ancient religious leaders of India. By 1917, his word had spread over India, and he was already known as the "Mahatma" ("Great Soul"), a title which appears to have been spontaneously bestowed upon him by his devoted followers.

In 1918 came Gandhi's opportunity to introduce the doctrine of non-violent resistance as a political weapon on a scale far larger than any of his earlier experiments in South Africa. The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, in itself a blow to the hopes of Indian nationalism, was shortly followed by the report of the Rowlatt Committee which had been appointed in 1917 to suggest measures for overcoming Indian terrorist activities. The Committee's proposals were at once embodied in two bills which, when passed, would enable judges to try political cases without juries, and empower the Provincial Governments to imprison suspects for an indefinite period without trial. The Rowlatt Acts, which were eventually passed in March 1919, aroused widespread indignation and precipitated the outbreak of the forces of discontent which had been gradually gaining strength during the preceding two years. The Indian industrialists were angry and alarmed at the refusal of the British Government to grant any real political concessions. They

had made substantial progress during the war years, but they were now denied the political and economic concessions necessary to protect that advance, and they anticipated that the British Government would revert to its former policy of retarding the development of native industries. Looking around them for a means to bring political pressure to bear on the British authorities, they found it in the discontented peasants and industrial workers, and in the extremely nationalist middle class.

All sections of the Indian people were ready for action. The peasants were suffering acutely from the rise in prices of essential commodities and the fall in agricultural prices after the war. The industrial workers were increasingly resentful at the appalling conditions under which they were forced to labor, and the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 saw an unprecedented outbreak of strikes. Many Moslems were angry at the treatment meted out by Britain to the defeated Caliph at Constantinople, and the supporters of Tilak in the Congress were clamoring for a revival of nationalist activity.

The Indian industrialists, however, hesitated to give financial support to a general popular movement, for they recognized that to organize such a movement for purposes other than the immediate economic interests of the workers and peasants would be both difficult and dangerous. What they wanted was a political philosophy and program which could utilize and at the same time control a mass movement, which if left to itself might end in attacking Indian vested interests as well as those of the British. It was at this point that they turned to Gandhi, whose "non-violent" philosophy was admirably suited to their purpose. Moreover, Gandhi was a

leader who could appeal to the Indian people. He had already acquired tremendous prestige among the Indian peasants, who were far more likely to follow the lead of an ascetic and mystic than that of a modern, well-dressed, and wealthy lawyer or industrialist. Gandhi therefore became the chosen leader of the Indian propertied classes in the campaign to organize the Indian people for a mass demonstration against British rule.

Gandhi made his first appearance as a leader in the Congress at a special session held in the summer of 1918, following the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. It was at this session that the older Moderates in the Congress, now hopelessly in the minority, left the Congress altogether, and later founded the National Liberal Federation, representing that small section of Indian political opinion which still wished to cooperate with British rule. At this special session the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals were condemned as "disappointing and unsatisfactory," and Gandhi denounced the Rowlatt Acts as "unjust, subversive of all the principles of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of the individual." He then began his task of arousing the Indian people to non-violent resistance and formed a *Satyagraha* League for this purpose early in 1919. Gandhi's appeal evoked a tremendous popular response. Mass demonstrations and strikes occurred all over India, in which both Hindus and Moslems joined with enthusiasm; the official Government report of 1919 speaks in amazement of the unity of the people and the "unprecedented fraternization between the Hindus and the Moslems." *Satyagraha* swept the country like wildfire, and in Gandhi's hands became a potent political weapon as well as a spiritual doctrine. Thou-

sands of young Indians stormed the jails, demanding to be arrested. Other thousands organized illegal meetings and allowed themselves to be beaten severely by the police without raising a hand. The call to non-violence was something that the majority of the Hindus instinctively understood. It appealed directly to their religious beliefs, and at the same time provided them with a concrete method by which to express their opposition to the repressive features of British rule.

The Government of India countered the movement with severe measures of repression. It was at this time that the tragedy of Amritsar occurred, when General Dyer fired on an unarmed crowd in an enclosed space without means of exit, killing 379 and wounding 1,200, the object being, according to his subsequent statement, to create "a moral effect from a military point of view, not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjab." Martial law was proclaimed in the Punjab, and the subsequent months were a grim record of executions, bombings, and harsh jail sentences for even the most minor political offenses.

Gandhi himself, however, was disturbed and alarmed by the way the situation had developed. This was not the idyllic non-violent movement of which he had dreamed. Sporadic cases of violence in different parts of the country convinced him and the other Congress leaders that the situation was getting out of hand, and caused him to declare that he had committed "a blunder of Himalayan dimensions which had enabled ill-disposed persons, not true passive resisters at all, to perpetuate disorders." Accordingly he suspended *Satyagraha* indefinitely, and at the annual meeting of the Congress in December 1919 he secured the adoption

of a resolution agreeing to cooperate with the Government in working the reformed constitution, although only after a sharp debate. The final resolution reiterated the criticism of the Reforms and the demand for "early steps to establish full Responsible Government in accordance with the principle of self-determination," but added that "pending such introduction, the Congress trusts that, so far as may be possible the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government." Gandhi's own attitude on this question was expressed in an article in his weekly journal, *Young India*, on December 31, 1919, in which he declared that "the Reforms Act coupled with the Proclamation is an earnest of the intention of the British people to do justice to India and it ought to remove suspicion on that score . . . Our duty therefore is not to subject the Reforms to carping criticism, but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success."

This statement is particularly important, since it was made after the passage of the Rowlatt Acts, after Amritsar, and the period of martial law in the Punjab, i.e., after those events which were subsequently given as the cause for the civil disobedience campaign of 1920-22, and shows that Gandhi's decision to launch this campaign was made on other grounds. The real truth was that the situation in India made a policy of cooperation impossible. The people had had a taste of political action, and the general popular unrest was further intensified by the economic crisis which began in 1920 with the collapse of the post-war boom. The misery of the peasants was sharpened by the continuing drop in agricultural prices, the higher taxation, and the increasing rapacity of money-lenders and landlords. The strike move-

ment among the industrial workers reached its height during the first half of 1920, with no less than 200 strikes involving one and a half million workers. The professional classes, intellectuals, and students, were resentful at the suspension of the nationalist struggle, and were demanding action. It was clear that if the Congress leaders continued to follow a policy of inaction they would lose control of the mass movement which might then develop into a war against landlords, money-lenders, industrialists, and all other propertied interests, Indian as well as British.

Non-Violent Civil Disobedience

Confronted with this situation, Gandhi and his supporters abandoned the idea of cooperation with the Reforms, and determined to assume the leadership of the mass movement. A special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in September 1920, at which Gandhi asked the enthusiastic delegates to adopt a policy of "progressive non-violent non-cooperation" for the attainment of *Swaraj* (Home Rule). The policy envisaged a series of steps, beginning with the renunciation of titles bestowed by the Government and a triple boycott—of the legislatures, law courts, and educational institutions—together with the revival of hand-spinning and weaving, and leading at some future date to the final stage of non-payment of taxes. At the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, this new program was adopted almost unanimously. The creed of the Congress was changed from the previous aim of colonial self-government within the Empire to the new aim of "the attainment of *Swaraj* by peaceful and legitimate means,"

and all true Indians were called upon to "non-cooperate" with the Government. The organization of the Congress was transformed into that of a mass political party, with units reaching down to the villages, and with a standing Executive, or Working Committee, of fifteen.

The Indian National Congress had now become the organized expression of Indian nationalist sentiment, but it must be kept in mind that the nationalist movement was largely controlled and financed by wealthy Indian industrialists and financiers who wished to use the Congress as a means of bringing mass pressure to bear on the British Government in order to strengthen their own position. To Gandhi, and to the majority of the conservative Congress leaders, *Swaraj* was little more than an abstract slogan for arousing popular enthusiasm. Thus Jawaharalal Nehru writes: "It was obvious that to most of our leaders Swaraj meant something much less than independence. Gandhiji was delightfully vague on the subject, and he did not encourage clear thinking about it either. But he always spoke, vaguely but definitely, in terms of the underdog, and this brought great comfort to many of us, although, at the same time, he was full of assurances to the top-dog also." [8] From the history of Gandhi's tactics as the leader of Indian nationalism, it is clear that his hope was to effect an alliance between the under-dog and the top-dog in the interests of the latter.

The adoption of the new Congress program at Nagpur, however, was the signal for a rapid advance of the mass movement which again threatened to exceed the limits envisaged by Gandhi and his conservative supporters in the

[8] *Toward Freedom*, p. 74.

Congress leadership. Peasant riots became frequent, particularly in the Punjab, culminating in the *Akali* rebellion of the Sikh peasantry against the Sikh priests and landlords in March 1921, which was ruthlessly suppressed by the British authorities. This was followed in August by the rising of the Moplahs, the Mohammedan peasantry of Malabar, against the moneylenders and landlords, who were chiefly Hindu. This rebellion was falsely interpreted in the press as a communal struggle, and served to increase communal friction between the Moslem leaders and the Indian Congress. In the meantime, the Congress had proceeded with its program of non-violent non-cooperation, and by the end of 1921, all the best known Congress leaders with the exception of Gandhi had been imprisoned.

In this situation, the Ahmedabad Congress was held in December 1921, with Gandhi in virtually complete control, and passed resolutions proclaiming the "fixed determination of the Congress to continue the campaign of non-violent non-cooperation with greater vigor . . . til Swaraj is established and the control of the Government of India passes into the hands of the people," and calling on all Indians to join a National Volunteer Corps for the purpose of defying the Government's laws. This new program was given the name of Civil Disobedience, and full dictatorial powers for its execution were given to "Mahatma Gandhi as the sole Executive authority of the Congress." It was significant, however, that the Ahmedabad resolutions omitted any mention of such measures as the non-payment of taxes, and that all references to mass civil disobedience were carefully hedged with such phrases as "under proper safeguards," and "when the mass of the people have been sufficiently trained

in the methods of non-violence." The peasant outbreaks in the Punjab and Malabar had alarmed Gandhi and the conservative leaders of Congress, who feared that the movement would once more get out of their control, and they moved with great caution. The Civil Disobedience campaign began with Gandhi's sending a letter to the Viceroy stating that unless political prisoners were released and repressive measures abandoned, "mass civil disobedience" would begin in the district of Bardoli only. A few days later, the news reached Gandhi that at Chauri Chaura, a small village in the United Provinces, a body of angry peasants led by Congress volunteers had attacked the police station and killed twenty-two policemen. This event convinced Gandhi that the mass movement was becoming too dangerous. He hastily called a special meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli on February 12, and passed resolutions suspending the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements, and replacing them with an eminently safe and "constructive" program of limited agrarian reforms. India, declared Gandhi, must undergo a period of self-purification and penance before there could be any thought of resuming *Satyagraha.*

The Indian industrialists, landlords, and financiers welcomed the suspension of a movement which had threatened to go far beyond the limits they intended, but the Bardoli decision created consternation among the other Congress leaders, most of whom were in prison, and left the rank and file members of Congress perplexed and angry. Jawaharlal Nehru, though he later endeavored to defend Gandhi's action on the grounds that the movement would otherwise have led to an open struggle with the Government in which

the latter would certainly have won, writes: "We were angry when we learnt of this stoppage of our struggle at a time when we seemed to be consolidating our position and advancing on all fronts. . . . It is possible that this sudden bottling up of a great movement contributed to a tragic development in the country. The drift to sporadic and futile violence in the political struggle was stopped, but the suppressed violence had to find a way out, and in the following years this perhaps aggravated the communal trouble." [4] But Nehru and others who shared his views were in prison, and there was no leader capable of challenging Gandhi's decision. Civil disobedience stopped, and once the movement had been paralyzed and demoralized from within, the Government was able to take the offensive without fear of precipitating a nationwide revolt. On March 10, Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment, without provoking a single demonstration or protest.

There has been considerable controversy among Indian nationalists over the Bardoli decision. Gandhi's supporters, notably Nehru, have argued that the real justification for his action was not the Chauri Chaura episode, but the fact that "our movement, in spite of its apparent power and the widespread enthusiasm, was going to pieces." Other Indians deny this, and it certainly does not seem to coincide with the British Government's own estimate of the situation on the eve of the Bardoli decision. On February 9, 1922, the Viceroy telegraphed the Secretary of State that "the lower classes in the towns have been seriously affected by the non-cooperation movement . . . In certain areas the peasantry have been affected . . . A large proportion of the Moham-

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 79 and 83.

medan population throughout the country are embittered and sullen. . . . The Government of India are prepared for disorder of a more formidable nature than has in the past occurred, and do not seek to minimise in any way the fact that great anxiety is caused by the situation." [5]

The readiness of the people for a decisive struggle was illustrated in the district of Guntur where, through a misunderstanding, a no-tax campaign was inaugurated. Less than 5% of the taxes were collected until Gandhi's countermanding order came, and at a word from the Congress leadership, this process could have been set in motion in many other parts of India. But this would have meant an attack not only on the financial basis of British rule, but also on the Indian landlords, whom Gandhi had no desire to antagonize. The following clauses of the Bardoli resolution itself prove that this was one of the important considerations which led to the abandonment of the whole campaign:

"1. The Working Committee deplores the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned the police station.

"2. In view of the violent outbreaks every time mass civil disobedience is inaugurated, indicating that the country is not

[5] The Government's attitude on the situation in 1922 was subsequently described by Lord Lloyd, then Governor of Bombay, in an interview with Drew Pearson, quoted by C. F. Andrews in the *New Republic*, April 3, 1939:

"He gave us a scare! His program filled our jails. You can't go arresting people forever, you know—not when there are 319,000,000 of them. And if they had taken his next step and refused to pay taxes! God knows where we should have been! Gandhi's was the most colossal experiment in world history; and it came within an inch of succeeding. But he couldn't control men's passions. They became violent and he called off his program. You know the rest. We jailed him."[2]

non-violent enough, the Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience . . . be suspended, and instructs the local Congress Committees to advise the cultivators to pay land revenue and other taxes due to the Government, and to suspend every other activity of an offensive character.

"5. All volunteer processions and public meetings for the defiance of authority should be stopped.

"6. The Working Committee advises Congress workers and organizations to inform the *ryots* (peasants) that withholding of rent payments to the *Zemindars* (landlords) is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country.

"7. The Working Committee assures the *Zemindars* that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights, and that even where *ryots* have grievances, the Committee desires that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration."

No less than three of these clauses deal specifically with the importance of paying taxes and rent to the Government and the landlords. There is here no question of violence and non-violence, since the non-payment of rent can hardly be termed a "violent" action, even though a revolutionary one. Why, then, should a resolution nominally condemning "violent" action, concentrate so strongly on the question of rent payments and the legal rights of landlords? The only possible conclusion is that the leadership of the Congress under Gandhi called off the disobedience campaign because they were afraid of the results of a genuine popular movement which might threaten interests with which they themselves were closely linked. Here was the first important evidence

of the contradictory role of the right-wing groups in the national struggle, opposed to British domination, yet fearful of mass action, and therefore welcoming Gandhi's "non-violence" doctrine as a happy mechanism for leading and at the same time controlling the mass movement.

PART IV



INDIA BETWEEN TWO WARS 1922-1939

CHAPTER I



THE PROGRESS OF INDIAN INDUSTRIALIZATION

WAR-INSPIRED British interest in Indian industrial development cooled rapidly after 1922. The feverish boom conditions of 1920-21 had resulted in an economic crisis and collapse during which many of the Indian firms formed during the war period had gone bankrupt. The era of abnormal profits was definitely past, and the flow of British capital to India dropped abruptly from £36 million in 1922 to £2.6 million in 1924, to £2 million in 1926, and to less than £1 million in 1927 or less than half of 1% of total British capital exports for that year.

After 1924, there was a similar decline in official interest in promoting Indian industry. Following the granting of protection to the iron and steel industry, the Tariff Board received applications from many other industries for protection, but the majority of these applications were not approved. Then, when the iron and steel protective system came up for renewal in 1927, the basic duties were lowered,

the subsidies abolished, and the principle of imperial preference, i.e., preferential treatment for the entry of British steel manufactures into India, was introduced. During the same year, the rupee exchange rate was stabilized at 1s. 6d. instead of the pre-war rate of 1s. 4d., a deflationary measure which was carried out in the face of vigorous opposition from Indian industrialists and merchants.

From 1927 to the outbreak of the war in 1939, the keynote of the Indian tariff system was imperial preference, which gave British products a competitive advantage over both non-Empire and Indian manufactures in the Indian market. In 1930 this system was extended to cotton piece goods, and in 1932, under the Ottawa Agreements, a general system of imperial preference was imposed on India despite strong protests from Indian manufacturers and an adverse vote in the Central Legislative Assembly. As a result, Britain's share of India's imports rose from 35.5% in 1931-2 to 40.6% in 1934-5. The duty on Japanese and other non-British cotton goods was raised to 50% and, for a period during the intense Anglo-Japanese trade war in 1933, to as high as 75%, while that on British cotton piece goods was lowered to 20%. Thus the protective tariff system of the early 20's, originally designed to encourage the development of Indian industries, was transformed into a system which assisted British manufacturers to compete in the Indian market while giving India in return the privilege of favored rates for the sale of her raw materials and semi-manufactures in the British market.

Indian industry, already hard-hit by the post-war depression and by increasing competition from foreign manufactures, suffered particularly severely during the world eco-

nomic depression which enormously reduced the people's purchasing power. During the depression, the value of India's production of raw materials and foodstuffs, on which about four-fifths of her population are dependent, fell by more than half. Between 1928-9 and 1932-3, the value of Indian exports fell from 3,390 million to 1,350 million rupees, but there was no moratorium or reduction in the payments which India had to make to Britain for home charges and interest on the public debt. These payments were met largely by the export of gold, which totalled £241 million for the seven years 1931-7, an amount larger than the total British gold reserves before the crisis. Much of this amount was "distress" gold which represented the last savings of the Indian peasants, and its export resulted in a still further impoverishment of the Indian market and a corresponding depression of Indian industry.

The sharp conflict of interest between British and Indian industrialists was brought into prominence during the various legislative debates on the tariff question. British interests naturally wanted an Indian tariff which would prevent the invasion of the Indian market by non-British competitors, particularly American and Japanese. Indian industrialists, on the other hand, wanted protection primarily against British manufacturers, who were far more strongly entrenched in the Indian market than their other foreign competitors. Thus the United Kingdom-India Trade Agreement of 1935, embodying and extending the Ottawa Agreements to a still wider system of imperial preference, was opposed by the non-official members of the Central Legislature and defeated by a vote of 66 to 58. This adverse vote was overridden by the Government of India, and the Agreement was

enforced. Indian opposition remained unabated, however, and a new Trade Agreement signed in March 1939 was again rejected by the Assembly by a vote of 59 to 47. This vote too was over-ruled by the Government.

As a consequence of these various obstacles—the lack of tariff protection, British control over the banking structure, increased competition from British manufactures, and the extremely low level of internal purchasing power—India's industrial development between the First and Second World Wars was extremely slow. There was some expansion of various light industries, notably sugar, matches, cigarettes, soap, paints, rubber goods, etc., but much of this growth was the result of the establishment of branch factories by British firms desiring to supply the Indian market from within the tariff wall. The cotton textile industry, the first and most important industrial enterprise in which Indian capital predominated, had experienced unparalleled prosperity during the war and the immediate post-war boom period. But after 1923, in spite of a continued increase in the volume of production, a depression of both prices and profits set in which continued more or less without interruption until the outbreak of the war in 1939. Various factors combined to depress the industry, among them the decline in exports of cotton yarn to China as a result of the growth of the Chinese spinning industry, faulty organization and unsound financing of many Indian mills, and increasingly severe Japanese competition which reduced the level of prices of both cotton yarn and piece goods in India.

With regard to the iron and steel industry, the most important Indian industrial enterprise outside the textile field, finished steel production did rise from 124,000 tons in 1919

to approximately 690,000 tons in 1938, and it was estimated that the Indian steel industry was supplying from 50 to 70% of the domestic demand. But this, however, was merely an indication of the extremely limited market for steel, inasmuch as India's steel output was less than that of Poland and less than one-sixth that of Japan. India continued to remain wholly dependent upon foreign sources for high quality steels, for many steel manufactures, and for all types of machinery. Increased steel production for use in modernizing a few light industries is not an indication of industrialization.

Another evidence of the backwardness of Indian industry is provided by the figures for employment in industries coming under the Factories Act. In the seventeen years between 1897 and 1914, the number of these workers had increased by 530,000—from 421,000 to 951,000. But in the seventeen-year period from 1922 to 1939, the number increased by only 390,000—from 1,361,000 to 1,751,000. The London *Economist*, reporting on the progress of "industrialization" in India at the end of 1936, summed up the situation as follows: "The proportion of the population dependent upon industry as a whole has tended to decline, and in some industries—in particular the jute and cotton industries—there has been an absolute decline in numbers employed. Although India has begun to modernize her industries, it can hardly be said that she is as yet being 'industrialized' . . ."

CHAPTER II



DEVELOPMENTS ON THE POLITICAL FRONT

For five years after the Bardoli decision calling off the civil disobedience campaign, the Indian nationalist movement was at a low ebb. The membership of the Congress declined sharply, and the people as a whole were confused, demoralized, and suffering from the severe economic depression. Religious friction again became acute in many parts of the country, as Moslem tenants rioted against Hindu moneylenders and Hindu peasants rebelled against the extortionate rents exacted by Moslem landlords. The Moslem League separated itself from the Congress and became once more the spokesman for a small group of wealthy Moslem landowners and merchants, bent on diverting the discontent of the peasants and workers into religious channels. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Hindu counterpart of the League, also conducted a vigorous and reactionary propaganda on behalf of a return to orthodox Hinduism and contributed its share to the growth of communal antagonism among the masses of the people.

Meanwhile, the conservative industrialist and landlord groups in the Congress, led by C. M. Das and Motilal Nehru (father of Jawaharlal Nehru), decided to abandon what they now regarded as the futile and impractical policies of Gandhi and form a new party within the Congress to contest the elections for the central and provincial legislatures and carry on the fight for greater political power by parliamentary action. This new party, named the Swaraj Party, achieved considerable success in the 1923 elections, and entered the Central Legislative Assembly as the strongest single party, able in cooperation with the Indian Liberals to maintain a precarious majority.

The hope of the Swarajists was that by a policy of cooperation with the British authorities and by constitutional methods, they would be able gradually to secure concessions and a larger share of both political and economic power. They were encouraged in this aim by the wartime shift in British policy toward Indian industrialization, and particularly by the granting of protection to the Indian iron and steel industry. But, as we have seen, the years following 1924 witnessed a sharp reversal of British policy with respect to Indian industries. In the political field, as well, the hopes of the Swarajists were soon doomed to disappointment. The Government of India Act of 1919 had provided that its provisions should be reviewed within ten years to determine what changes were desirable, and the Swarajist leaders had expected that they would be allowed to participate in the next stage of constitutional reform. At the end of 1927, the Simon Commission was appointed to visit India to make a report on Indian conditions which could serve as the basis for a new constitution. But to the dismay and irritation of

all sections of Indian opinion, the personnel of the mission consisted of Sir John Simon and six members of Parliament with no experience in the East, while Indian representation was completely excluded. Here was a clear-cut declaration to the Indian leaders that Britain alone was competent to judge whether and what political changes should be made.

In the meantime, a new factor had entered the Indian political situation, with the growth of organized political action on the part of the industrial workers and peasants, and the spread of socialist ideas within the nationalist movement. The first Workers' and Peasants' Party was formed in Bengal in February, 1926, and others were soon established in the United Provinces, Bombay, and the Punjab. In 1928 these parties united to form the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party which held its first Congress in December 1928. Simultaneously with the growth of these Workers' and Peasants' parties, trade union membership rapidly increased. Although the Indian Trade Union Congress had been founded in 1920 largely for the purpose of nominating Indian representatives to the International Labor Conference at Geneva, and with only limited connections with the industrial working class, it formed a logical meeting ground for the leaders of the newly forming trade unions, and by 1927 the Trade Union Congress had united fifty-seven affiliated unions with a membership of about 150,000. The year 1928 was marked by a great strike wave throughout India, during which nearly 32 million working days were lost, and by a rapid increase in trade union organization, particularly in Bombay.

The rise of a more militant leadership within the trade union movement was paralleled by the development of a

stronger left wing group within the Congress itself. The Madras session of the Congress at the end of 1927 showed the advance of more radical ideas, particularly among the younger members. A resolution making complete independence for India the aim of the nationalist movement was unanimously carried. It was decided to boycott the Simon Commission, and to participate in an All-Parties Conference to draft an alternative constitutional scheme for India. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, the principal leaders of the youth and left-wing groups within the Congress, were appointed General Secretaries for the coming year.

During 1928, the right-wing leaders in Congress, including Das and Motilal Nehru, became convinced that unless quick action were taken, the left-wing group might soon come to dominate Congress policies. Accordingly, at the All-Parties Conference, they worked in cooperation with conservative groups outside the Congress to evolve a plan for a constitution based on responsible government within the British Empire, thus shelving the earlier demand for complete independence. This plan was known as the Nehru Report, from the chairman of the drafting committee, Motilal Nehru.

In view of the rising tide of popular feeling, however, there was considerable doubt as to whether the plan would be accepted by the Congress membership. Faced with this problem, the right-wing leadership, representing the industrial and landlord groups who had previously thrust Gandhi aside to form the Swaraj Party, turned to him once more, and at the Calcutta session of the Congress at the end of 1928, Gandhi returned to the active leadership of the Con-

gress. Whatever their views as to his religious beliefs and political tactics, the conservatives recognized that Gandhi was an extremely able politician, with a tremendous prestige among the people of India which no other leader could hope to equal. Once more, the hopes of the Indian propertied classes were pinned on Gandhi as the man to unleash just enough mass activity to secure concessions from the British, and at the same time save India from a genuine revolutionary movement.

At the Calcutta session, Gandhi was able to secure acceptance of the Nehru Report only by promising that if the Report were not accepted by the British Government by December 31, 1929, the Congress would revive the policy of non-violent non-cooperation, this time to begin with a refusal to pay taxes. Even with this qualification, the resolution was only passed by a vote of 1,350 against 973 for the counter resolution offered by Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru insisting on the immediate aim of complete independence. Gandhi thus managed to delay action for twelve critical months, and the Government of India, alarmed at the growing militancy of the independence movement, was quick to take advantage of this respite. In March 1929, the most prominent leaders of the working-class movement were arrested in all parts of India, and brought to Meerut for trial. The Meerut trial was then dragged out for four years, during all the subsequent civil disobedience campaign, before sentence was even passed. Besides representing the effective leadership of the trade unions and the Workers' and Peasants' Party, the Meerut prisoners also included members of the All-India Congress Committee. The working class movement was thus decapitated before the decisive struggle with

the Congress was even begun.

The moderate elements in Congress made one last effort to reach an agreement with the Government. On October 31, 1929, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax) issued a statement on behalf of the British Government that "it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status,"—a statement which was intended to pave the way for the coming Round Table Conference in London. The moderate political leaders in India immediately united to issue a response, known as the Delhi Manifesto, wholeheartedly offering cooperation: "We appreciate the sincerity underlying the declaration. . . . We hope to be able to tender our cooperation with His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a scheme for a Dominion constitution suitable to India's needs." Among those who signed this statement were Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and others. The conditions which they laid down were that (1) all discussions at the proposed Round Table Conference should be on the basis of full Dominion Status for India; (2) there should be a predominant representation of Congress at the conference; and (3) a general amnesty of political prisoners should be declared. These demands, however, were unacceptable to the British Government and the subsequent negotiations with the Viceroy came to nothing.

Indian Declaration of Independence

Accordingly, at the Lahore Congress in December, 1929, Gandhi could no longer oppose the demands of the Congress

rank and file for positive action. The Nehru Report was declared to have lapsed, and *Purna Swaraj*, or Complete Independence, was declared to be the Congress aim. The All-India Congress Committee was authorized "whenever it deems fit, to launch a program of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes," and January 26, 1930, was proclaimed as the first Indian Independence Day. As few Americans have presumably ever read the Indian Declaration of Independence adopted by the Congress Party at the Lahore session, the most essential portions are printed herewith:

"We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil . . . so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but . . . has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swaraj*, or complete independence.

"India has been ruined economically. The revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is seven *pice* (less than 4¢) a day . . . Village industries, such as handspinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, . . . and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

"Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. Customs duties betray clear

partiality for British manufactures, and revenue from them is used not to lessen the burden on the masses but for sustaining a highly extravagant administration. Still more arbitrary has been the manipulation of the exchange ration which has resulted in millions being drained away from the country.

"Politically, India's status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. No reforms have given real political power to the people . . . The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied us . . . All administrative talent is killed, and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices and clerkships. Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings, and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.

"Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defense against foreign aggression . . .

"We hold it a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country . . . We therefore hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of attaining *Purna Swaraj*."

From this declaration, it is justifiable to assume that the majority of the Congress membership and its followers outside the party considered that the forthcoming civil disobedience campaign was to be an all-out struggle for complete independence. Yet immediately after the Lahore meeting, Gandhi, through his paper *Young India*, made an offer of Eleven Points covering various reforms (e.g., a rupee exchange rate of 1s. 4d., reduction of land revenue and military expenditure, protective duties against foreign cloth,

etc.) in return for which civil disobedience would be called off. The publication of these Eleven Points was naturally taken by the British authorities as a sign that the demand for independence was nothing more than a bargaining point to be abandoned in return for substantial concessions.

The strategy of the campaign was also vague and undefined. Gandhi was given complete power to lead and control the campaign, with no lines laid down by the elected leadership of the Congress. In a letter to the Viceroy on March 2, 1930, he wrote: "The party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt . . . It is my purpose to set in motion that force (non-violence) as well against the organized violence force of the British rule as the unorganized violence force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give rein to both forces above mentioned." From this it is clear that what Gandhi contemplated was not an all-out fight for independence, but a demonstration of mass pressure to secure concessions from the British Government. Given this objective, his tactics were extremely skillful. He chose to center his campaign around an attack on the Government's salt monopoly which bore with special severity on the poor peasants. Here was a program which even the most backward and illiterate peasants could understand and support, and also one which would divert them from launching no-rent campaigns against the landlords. Furthermore, the salt tax issue was of no immediate concern to the more militant industrial working class which Gandhi regarded as a dangerous section of the "party of violence" and which he was anxious to exclude from the movement.

So began the famous three weeks' Salt March across

India to the sea by Gandhi and seventy-eight hand-picked followers, completed on April 6, 1930 with the ceremonial boiling of illegal salt at Dandi. The Salt March was given world-wide publicity, and was hailed by the Congress leaders as a triumph of strategy for arousing the masses of the Indian people. However, the mass movement soon passed beyond the limits contemplated by Gandhi and his colleagues. The official Congress instruction had called for only the most peaceful forms of civil disobedience: violation of the Salt Law, boycott of foreign cloth, etc., but popular feeling was running high. Strikes and large mass demonstrations were held in many parts of the country. Peasants began spontaneous no-rent campaigns. At Peshawar, where troops had been sent to quell the local demonstrations, two platoons of the 18th Royal Garhwali Rifles, Hindu troops in the midst of a Moslem crowd, refused to obey the order to fire, broke ranks and mingled with the people. From April 25 to May 4, the city was in the hands of the people, and was then "recaptured" by a strong British force supported by air squadrons.

The British Government was growing alarmed at the strength and militancy of the movement, and believing that the authority of Gandhi was in danger of waning, they arrested him on May 5 in the hope that this would strengthen his hold over his unruly followers. The response to his arrest, however, was a wave of strikes and demonstrations. The Government met the rising tide of revolutionary zeal with stern repressive measures. In June, the Congress and all its allied organizations were declared illegal and during the next nine months some 90,000 men and women were arrested and sentenced for civil disobedience. Meetings were

broken up by force, and there were numerous instances of firing on unarmed crowds. "But for the presence of troops and armed police," declared *A Letter from Bombay* published in the *Spectator* of July 5, 1930, "the Government of Bombay would be overthrown in a day, and the administration would be taken over by Congress with the assent of all." British business men in Bombay, alarmed by the disastrous effects of the boycott, joined with Indian industrialists through the Millowners' Association and the Chamber of Commerce in demanding the granting of immediate self-government for India on a Dominion basis. Alarm grew among the British and the conservative elements within the Congress over the strength and determination of the popular movement. This mutual alarm paved the way for the reopening of negotiations, and on January 26, 1931, Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee were released from jail. After prolonged negotiations between Gandhi and the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement was signed on March 4, and the civil disobedience campaign was provisionally suspended.

The Irwin-Gandhi Agreement did not secure a single one of the Congress aims. Civil disobedience was to be discontinued. Congress was to participate in the Round Table Conference which it had sworn to boycott. The basis of discussion at the Round Table Conference was to be a Federal Constitution for India, not Dominion Status as Gandhi had stipulated. Repressive ordinances were to be withdrawn and political prisoners released, but not those guilty of "violence" or soldiers guilty of disobeying orders. The boycott of foreign goods was to be allowed, but not "exclusively against British goods," not for "political ends," and not with

any picketing that might be regarded as involving "coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration." The maximum gain was the right of peaceful boycott of foreign cloth, a fact which pointed clearly to the nature of the Indian interests which supported Gandhi in the agreement.

Among the Indian people as a whole, the fact that the British Government had been forced to sign a treaty with the leader of the Congress, which it had previously declared an illegal organization, was hailed as a great triumph for the nationalist movement. Gradually, however, the realization dawned that nothing had actually been accomplished. The aim of complete independence had been abandoned. Not even one of Gandhi's Eleven Points had been granted. The Irwin-Gandhi Agreement was, in fact, a repetition of the Bardoli decision. Once more the struggle was suddenly called off at the moment when it was reaching its greatest strength. Gandhi himself justified the Agreement in a press interview on March 6, by explaining that *Purna Swaraj* really means "disciplined self-rule from within" and by no means excludes "association with England," and the Karachi Congress, hastily convened at the end of March, unanimously endorsed the Agreement—the left-wing leaders such as Bose and Nehru apparently not daring to offer opposition. Outside the Congress, however, criticism of the Agreement was strong among the youth organizations and the working class, and the Bombay workers organized a hostile demonstration against Gandhi on his departure for the Round Table Conference in London.

When Gandhi returned empty handed at the end of 1931, after his fruitless participation in the Round Table Conference, he found that the Government of India had made com-

plete preparations for a decisive show-down with the nationalist movement. On January 4, 1932, the Government acted. Negotiations with the Congress were broken off; Gandhi was arrested, together with all the principal Congress leaders and organizers; the Congress and all its organizations were declared illegal, their press banned, their funds and property confiscated. The Government made it clear that its purpose was to crush Congress decisively. Sir Samuel Hoare told the House of Commons that the Ordinances were "very drastic and severe" and that there was to be no "drawn battle" this time. Repression in 1932-33 far exceeded that of 1930-31. During the first four months there were some 80,000 arrests, and by March 1933, according to the Congress estimates, the total had reached 120,000.

The people continued to struggle, but it was a struggle without leadership. In the summer of 1932 Gandhi abandoned the nationalist movement and devoted himself to the cause of the *Harijans* (Untouchables) in order to counteract the activities of Ambedkar. His dramatic "fast unto death" in September was directed not against the repressive tactics of the British Government, but against the plan for the separate representation of the Untouchables embodied in the Communal Award of 1932. The episode not only diverted attention from the national struggle of which he was supposed to be the leader, but also served to convince many Moslems that Gandhi was primarily concerned with preserving Hinduism and the caste system. In May 1933, Gandhi was released from prison, and in July the Congress leadership voted to end mass civil disobedience and replace it by individual civil disobedience. At the same time, all subsidiary organizations of the Congress were dissolved. The

British Government made no response to this move, and the struggle dragged on until May 1934. In April, Gandhi issued a statement explaining why the movement had failed. The fault lay with the people. "I feel that the masses have not yet received the message of *Satyagraha* owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission . . . *Satyagraha* needs to be confined to one qualified person at a time . . . In the present circumstances only one, and that myself, should for the time being bear the responsibility of civil disobedience." Here was the final *reductio ad absurdum* of Gandhi's theory of "non-violent non-cooperation" as the way of liberation for the Indian people.

In May 1934, the All-India Congress Committee was allowed to meet at Patna to end civil disobedience unconditionally. There were no terms and no concessions from the Government. In June 1934, the Government lifted the ban on the Congress, and in the autumn of the same year, Gandhi resigned from membership in the Congress on the grounds that "there is a growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself" over the question of non-violence, but he remained the most powerful guiding influence behind the scenes.

CHAPTER III



THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF 1935

In the meantime, India's constitutional future was being settled in London. The Third Round Table Conference of 1932 completed its studies, and a White Paper was published early in 1933, embodying the proposed terms of the new constitution. After further study by a Joint Select Committee of the House of Commons, the plan was presented to Parliament and finally became law as the Government of India Act of 1935. This voluminous document, including more than 450 sections and 235 pages of print, was the product of years of discussion, scores of memoranda, numerous commissions and reports, and vast quantities of "evidence." It is usually described by British writers and lecturers as granting a very large and generous measure of self-government to India, subject only to a few necessary safeguards, and it should be noted that the constitution was strongly condemned by British conservatives as far too liberal. On the other hand, virtually all sections of Indian opinion were

highly critical of the constitution as a whole, and particularly of its federal provisions, which were regarded as a plan for strengthening British control over India by introducing the pro-British Princes as a counterweight to the nationalist movement in the proposed Central Government.

The 1935 Constitution consisted of two main sections: the Federal section for the Central Government of the proposed All-India Federation of British India and the Indian States; and the Provincial section, for the Provinces of British India. The Provincial section came into operation on April 1, 1937, and has already been described in Part I—Chapter 3. The most important feature of the Constitution, however, and the one around which the chief Indian objections have centered, was its plan for bringing the Indian States and British India together under a single Federal Government. As we noted earlier, it was the Princes themselves who originally suggested their willingness to enter such a Federation, provided their internal sovereignty was guaranteed and the obligations of the British Crown remained unaltered. To many British conservative statesmen, this offer supplied a promising solution for the Indian constitutional problem. Without the stabilizing weight of the Princes in the Central Government, they believed it would be unsafe to permit any large measure of self-government in the British Indian provinces. This belief was clearly stated in the Report of the Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform in 1934: "To create autonomous units without any corresponding adaptation of the Central Legislature would be . . . to give full play to the powerful centrifugal forces of Provincial Autonomy without any attempt to counteract them and to ensure the continued unity of India." The Joint Committee went on to

point out that the all-important Army Budget might be jeopardized in a central government under a responsible ministry, because the Indian Ministers would "naturally wish to save money on defense in order that they may spend it on 'nation-building' departments under their own charge . . . The declaration of the Princes . . . has introduced a new, and, in our judgment, a determining factor. It is reasonable to expect that the presence in the Central Executive and Legislature of representatives of the Princes who have always taken so keen an interest in all matters relating to defense will afford a guarantee that these grave matters will be weighed and considered with a full appreciation of the issues at stake."

Some of the speeches made by British supporters of Federation make it easy to understand the skepticism of Indian nationalists. A typical statement was that of the Marquess of Reading, a former Viceroy, who declared during the parliamentary debates that "If the Princes come into a Federation of All India . . . there will always be a steadying influence . . . What is it we have most to fear? There are those who agitate for independence for India, for the right to secede from the Empire altogether. I believe myself that it is an insignificant minority that is in favour of this, but it is an articulate minority and it has behind it the organization of the Congress. It becomes important, therefore, that we should get what steadying influence we can against this view. . . . There will be approximately 33 per cent of the Princes who will be members of the Legislature, with 40 per cent in the Upper Chamber. There are of course large bodies of Indians who do not take the view of Congress. So that with that in-

fluence in the federated Legislature I am not afraid in the slightest degree of anything that may happen, even if Congress managed to get the largest proportion of votes."

The federal provisions of the 1935 constitution as finally enacted did nothing to dispel the Indian suspicion that its main aim was to introduce the Princes as a counterweight to the nationalist aspirations of British India, and to give pro-British groups plus the representatives of the Princes an unshakable preponderance of power in the new Federal Legislature. This Legislature was to be composed of an upper chamber, the Council of State, and a lower chamber, the Federal Assembly. The Indian Princes, whose States contained only one-fourth of the total population of India, were given two-fifths of the seats in the Council of State—104 out of 260—and one-third of the seats in the Assembly—125 out of 375. The new Legislature was not empowered to legislate for India as a whole, since the internal powers of the Princes were to remain inviolate, and the people of the States were to remain without civil rights or representation in the new central government. Of the remaining 156 seats in the Council of State, only 75 were general seats open to direct election from an extremely narrow electorate estimated at not more than 150,000; the remaining seats being allocated among various religious and economic groups—Moslems, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, etc. Of the 250 seats in the Federal Assembly, only 86 were to be general seats open to indirect election from the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, while the rest were divided among communal or other groups.

The composition of this Lower House, according to the plan, would be as follows:

	Number of Seats
Princes' nominees	125
General Seats	86
Moslems	82
Scheduled Castes	19
Commerce and Industry	11
Labor	10
Women	9
Europeans	8
Indian Christians	8
Landholders	7
Sikhs	6
Anglo-Indians	4
	375

Here the "protection of minorities" was certainly carried to a fine point, for even assuming that the Hindus won every seat reserved for Commerce and Industry, Labor, Women, and Landholders, they would still have only 48% of the representation of British India, although they comprise fully two-thirds of the population. In actual practice it is estimated that Hindus could have won at most 42% of the seats. Moreover, it is clear that with this splitting of the electorate into so many different groups, the representatives of the Princes together with the Europeans and the extreme conservatives among the landholders would be certain to hold the balance of power in both the upper and lower chambers, and could easily block any progressive measures proposed by the representatives of the Congress.

The special representation granted the Princes was not, however, the only or even the main basis for the opposition of the people of British India to the plan. For the new Federal Legislature was not only unrepresentative of the Indian

people; it had none of the powers normally associated with "responsible" government. The system of "dyarchy" which the Simon Commission had condemned as unworkable in the Provinces, and which was eliminated there under the 1935 Act, was introduced into the proposed Central Government. Complete control over the key departments of Defense, Foreign Affairs, and Ecclesiastical Affairs was "reserved" in the hands of the Governor-General, who was also given "special responsibilities" in matters affecting law and order, finance, minorities, etc. In addition, the Governor-General retained unrestricted power to veto any act of the Legislature. In other matters, the Governor-General was to be assisted by a Council of Ministers chosen by him from the Legislature but not responsible to it.

The proposed Federal Legislature was to have no power to vote on the greater part of the Central Budget, including defense expenditure, debt interest, major pensions and salaries, etc., and the Governor-General was empowered at his discretion to determine whether any item of expenditure fell into the non-votable class. Furthermore, no financial bill or grant could be introduced into the Legislature without the prior approval of the Governor-General, and if the Assembly refused or reduced a grant, the latter could declare it necessary for the discharge of his special responsibilities and authorize the expenditure. All matters pertaining to "defense" and army appropriations were "reserved" entirely under the control of the Governor-General. The members of the Civil Service and Police were to be appointed by the Secretary of State for India, and their rights and conditions of service protected by special provisions. Finally, the Legislature's law-making power was severely restricted. It was for-

bidden to pass any measures which "discriminated against" British trade, industry, banking, and shipping interests operating in India, a provision designed to forestall any attempt to subsidize the development of Indian-controlled industries and trade. Any law passed could be vetoed by the Governor-General, and if the Legislature failed to pass a measure which the Government considered necessary, the Governor-General was empowered to pass it as a "Governor-General's Act" which would have the same force as ordinary legislation.

Turning now to the powers of the Governor-General, the "few essential safeguards" to which British spokesmen refer so lightly, we find that no less than ninety-four sections of the Act confer special discretionary powers on the Governor-General. Among other things, he was empowered, independently of any advice from his Ministers, to appoint or dismiss Ministers; veto legislation passed by the Legislature and pass legislation rejected by the Legislature; issue ordinances and veto Provincial legislation; control the use of the armed forces; dissolve the Legislature; and suspend the Constitution. In addition to the "Reserved Departments" under his exclusive control, the Governor-General was given eight "special responsibilities" in connection with which he might take any action he considered necessary. These responsibilities include: the prevention of any grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of India or any part thereof; protection of the rights and interests of minorities and of the Indian Princes; prevention of commercial or financial discrimination against British individuals or companies operating in India; prevention of discrimination against British imports into India; safeguarding the financial stability and credit of the Federal Gov-

ernment; and a final omnibus safeguard: "securing that the due discharge of his functions with respect to matters with respect to which he is by or under this Act required to act in his discretion, is not prejudiced or impeded by any course of action taken with respect to any other matter."

Space does not permit the quoting of chapter and verse on every clause of the Act of 1935, but a close examination of its federal provisions leads inescapably to the following conclusions: it confirmed and enlarged the powers of an executive responsible solely to the British Government; it strengthened the alliance between the British Government and the princes, landlords, and other reactionary elements in India; it ensured that the predominant position of British trade, industry, banking, and shipping should remain unshaken; it retained in British hands complete control over Indian finance, foreign affairs, and military affairs; and it denied to the Indian people any opportunity to interfere with or modify the system of British-controlled administration.

The verdict of a leading constitutional authority in England, Professor A. B. Keith, on this Constitution was as follows: "It is difficult to resist the impression that either responsible government should have been frankly declared impossible or the reality conceded . . . For the federal scheme it is difficult to feel any satisfaction . . . It is too obvious that on the British side the scheme is favoured in order to combat any dangerous elements of democracy contributed by British India . . . It is difficult to deny the contention in India that federation was largely evoked by the desire to evade the issue of extending responsible government to the central government of British India. Moreover,

the withholding of defense and external affairs from federal control . . . renders the alleged concession of responsibility all but meaningless." [1]

Federation was scheduled to go into effect when Princes representing 51% of the population of the Indian States signed "instruments of accession." But the Princes themselves became cool toward the idea of Federation even before the India Bill was enacted in 1935, on the grounds that it did not provide adequate safeguards for their privileges and dignities. This may seem surprising in view of the special representation granted the Princes in the proposed new Government but it is true that Federation would have necessarily involved the loss of certain Princely privileges, such as their right to have their own stamps, coins, etc. Furthermore, certain States with their own customs regimes would have suffered considerable financial loss as much of their revenue is derived from import tariffs which would have to be abolished in any genuine federation. Above all, the Princes feared that their entry into a Federal Government with representatives of British India would encourage the Indian National Congress to undertake political activity among the people of the States. Discussions between the Princes and the Viceroy therefore dragged on for several years, with the former holding out for greater concessions and guaranties as their price for signing up. Finally, in June 1939, the Indian Princes Conference rejected the proposed terms for their entry, and on September 11, after the outbreak of war, the Viceroy announced that for the duration of the war the plans for Federation would be discontinued. There is no doubt, how-

[1] A. B. Keith, *A Constitutional History of India, 1600-1935*, London, 1936, pp. 473-4.

ever, that if Federation had been merely a matter between the British Government and the Princes, it would have come into operation without great delay. The real obstacle was the Indian nationalists' uncompromising opposition of the federal provisions of the 1935 Act.

One other provision of the Government of India Act of 1935 which deserves brief mention was the administrative separation of Burma from India, by which Burma became a separate colony of the British Empire. This separation, put into effect in 1937, was officially explained on the grounds that the Burmese were a totally different race, in a different stage of political development from the provinces of British India, and with special interests and problems which required a separate administration. The history of the controversy over this question is a long and complicated one, which need not detain us here. It is important to note, however, that a major motive on the part of the British Government was to establish a buffer state between the two strongest nationalist movements in Asia—the Chinese and the Indian. The British could not foresee that the time was soon to come when close military contact between India and China was to be a matter of vital strategic importance to the United Nations. Nor did they realize that, by fostering anti-Chinese and anti-Indian sentiments and movements in Burma, the separation measure laid the ground for the powerful fifth column whose activities were to prove so fatal when the Japanese attacked.

CHAPTER IV



THE NATIONALIST STRUGGLE, 1936-1939

AFTER the collapse of the civil disobedience campaign in 1934, the Indian nationalist movement went through two years of stagnation during which the registered membership of the Congress fell below half a million. Beginning in 1936, however, a rapid advance took place, following the decision to contest the provincial elections to be held under the new Constitution. By the end of 1937, after the formation of Congress Ministries in eight of the eleven Provinces of British India, the Congress membership totalled more than three million, and by the Tripuri session of the Congress in March 1939, it had reached five million.

The Lucknow Congress held in the spring of 1936 approved the decision to contest the elections under the new Act during the coming year. In August, an Election Manifesto was issued which stressed the fact that the Congress still adhered to the aim of complete independence and a Constituent Assembly, denounced the 1935 Constitution, and

explained that the purpose of sending Congress representatives to the legislatures would be "not to cooperate with the Act, but to combat it and seek to end it." The Election Manifesto also set forth a concrete social and economic program which played an important part in mobilizing the mass support won by Congress during the election campaign, because it voiced the immediate demands of the peasants and industrial workers. The most important passages in this declaration were as follows:

"The Congress realizes that independence cannot be achieved through these legislatures, nor can the problems of poverty and unemployment be effectively tackled by them. Nevertheless the Congress places its general program before the people of India so that they may know what it stands for and what it will try to achieve, whenever it has the power to do so. . . .

"The most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry, fundamentally due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems, and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce . . .

"The Congress reiterates its declaration made at Karachi (1931) that it stands for a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent, and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue. . . .

"The question of indebtedness requires urgent consideration and the formulation of a scheme including the declaration of a moratorium, and inquiry into and scaling down of debts and the provision of cheap credit facilities by the State. This relief should extend to the agricultural tenants, peasant proprietors, small landholders and petty traders.

"In regard to industrial workers the policy of the Congress is to secure to them a decent standard of living, hours of work and conditions of labor in conformity, as far as the economic conditions of the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment and the right of workers to form unions and to strike for the protection of their interests.

"The Congress has already declared that it stands for the removal of all sex disabilities whether legal or social or in any sphere of public activity. It has expressed itself in favor of maternity benefits and the protection of women workers. The women of India have already taken a leading part in the freedom struggle, and the Congress looks forward to their sharing, in an equal measure with the men of India, the privileges and obligations of a free India . . ."

This Manifesto was endorsed by the Faizpur Congress in December 1936, which adopted the following resolution regarding the Congress attitude toward the new Constitution and the reasons for contesting the elections:

"This Congress reiterates its entire rejection of the Government of India Act of 1935 and the Constitution that has been imposed on India against the declared will of the people of the country. In the opinion of the Congress any cooperation with the Constitution is a betrayal of India's struggle for freedom and a strengthening of the hold of British Imperialism. . . . The Congress therefore repeats its resolve not to submit to this Constitution or to cooperate with it, but to combat it, both inside and outside the legislatures, so as to end it. The Congress does not and will not recognize the right of any external power or authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India, and every such attempt will be met by the organized and uncompromising opposition of the Indian people. . . . The Congress stands for a genuine democratic State in India where

political power has been transferred to the people as a whole and the Government is under their effective control. Such a State can only come into existence through a Constituent Assembly, elected by adult suffrage, and having the power to determine finally the Constitution of the country . . ."

The 1937 elections resulted in a substantial victory for the Congress Party, despite the fact that its greatest strength was among the disenfranchised peasants and workers, and that in certain instances, British provincial officials used their influence to create or support opposing parties, such as the National Agriculturist Party in the United Provinces, and the Unionist Party in the Punjab. Out of a total of 1,585 seats in the Provincial Legislatures, the Congress won 715. It secured absolute majorities in Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Bihar, and Orissa. In the predominantly Moslem Northwest Frontier Province, Congress candidates were elected to 15 of the 36 seats reserved for Moslems, while the Moslem League was not able to win a single seat. The Congress was thus able, with the cooperation of the United Moslem Nationalists, to form a ministry in the most thoroughly Moslem Province in India. A Congress-coalition government was also later formed in Assam, thereby giving Congress control over eight of the eleven Provincial Governments, subject of course to the limitations imposed by the 1935 constitution.

The Congress victory made a profound impression on British opinion. Even the London *Times* was compelled to abandon its treatment of the Congress as an "insignificant minority," and wrote editorially on March 9, 1937 that "the elections have shown that the Congress Party alone is organized on more than a Provincial basis. Its record of successes

has been impressive . . . and, though it owes much to its excellent organization and to the divisions and lack of organization of the more conservative elements, these factors alone do not explain its numerous victories . . . The party's proposals have been more positive and constructive than those of most of its opponents. In the agricultural constituencies, where it has been unexpectedly successful, it has put forward an extensive programme of rural reform. . . . The party has won its victories . . . on issues which interested millions of Indian rural voters and scores of millions who had no votes." This last point is particularly important, for there is no question but that the Congress victory would have been far more sweeping if the masses of the Indian peasantry to whom its program made the greatest appeal had been able to vote.

Opinion within the Congress leadership was sharply divided on the question of forming ministries in those Provinces where Congress had won a majority in the legislatures. Gandhi and the right-wing leaders, who were in effective control of the party machinery, maintained that by participating in the new Provincial Governments, Congress could improve its position in the fight against the new Constitution. Nehru and the left-wing groups, on the other hand, were strongly opposed to taking office, on the grounds that to participate in a British-controlled administration would be a fatal compromise of the Congress position and a betrayal of the nationalist movement. They distrusted the right-wing's cautious "constitutional" attitude toward the nationalist struggle, and feared that once in office, the moderates nominated by the right-wing leadership would tend to cooperate with the British and with the conservative Indian indus-

trial and landlord interests, and become increasingly hostile toward all forms of militant mass action.

In March 1937, the All-India Congress Committee adopted a resolution authorizing "the acceptance of offices in the Provinces where Congress commands a majority in the legislature, provided that ministership shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress Party in the legislature is satisfied and able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the office of Ministers in regard to their constitutional activities." This compromise formula, concocted by Gandhi, was adopted by a vote of 127 to 70 over the strenuous opposition of Nehru, Bose, and other left-wing leaders. The British Government of India was naturally unwilling to make any such blanket promise as the resolution demanded, but after three months of negotiations, the Viceroy announced on June 22 that the Provincial Governors were anxious "not to provoke conflicts with their Ministers, to whatever party their Ministers belong, and to leave nothing undone to avoid or resolve such conflicts." This statement was accepted by Gandhi and the right-wingers in Congress as a form of "gentleman's agreement" that the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors would not use their veto powers except in an extraordinary emergency. Congress Ministries were accordingly formed in Bombay, Madras, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces, Orissa, and the Northwest Frontier, and later in Assam. In Bengal, the Punjab, and Sind, non-Congress coalition governments were formed, with Moslem Premiers. Thus all the Provinces of British India became "self-governing" under the terms of the 1935 Constitution.

Congress Ministries in Office

The Congress Ministries held office for a little over two years, until November 1939, when they resigned in protest against the British Government's war policy toward India. They were not, of course, real Governments in the western sense of the word. Gandhi himself, in an article in *Harijan*, recognized the severe limitations on their powers, but emphasized that he had suggested that Congress take office "not to work the Act in the manner expected by the framers, but in a manner so as to hasten the day of substituting it by a genuine Act of India's own making." In practice, however, most of the Ministers appointed by the Congress Executive were right-wing conservatives who gradually began to "work the Act in the manner expected by its framers," thereby confirming the fears of the left-wing groups in Congress, and eliciting the approval of the British authorities for the "moderation" of their program and their "smooth cooperation with British governors and civil servants." In the early period of their administration, the Ministries did register a number of achievements. Political prisoners were released, bans on many political organizations were lifted, and blacklists of newspapers excluded from government printing or advertising on account of their political opinions were cancelled. Wage increases were secured for workers in Bombay and the United Provinces through the intervention of the Congress Ministries. In the important field of agrarian legislation, some measures were taken for cancelling a portion of old debt, as in the Madras Agriculturists' Debt Relief Act, and for a limitation of the rate of interest. Tenancy legislation was also passed in several Provinces, designed to afford

some protection against foreclosures and limit interest on arrears of rent. In the field of education and public health, the Congress Governments attempted limited reforms, but their efforts were severely handicapped by lack of finance.

In general, however, the policies pursued by the Congress Ministries reflected the cautious and conservative outlook of the right-wing leadership of Congress and provoked sharp dissatisfaction among the rank and file of the nationalist movement because of their failure to carry out their electoral promises of far-reaching agrarian and industrial reforms. The extent of the agrarian legislation was very limited and did not touch the basic problems of rent, tenancy, and land revenue, and the peasantry, particularly in Bihar, Orissa, and the United Provinces, accused the Ministries of paying excessive deference to landlords and other vested interests.

Then, too, the Congress Governments were confronted by the exceedingly delicate and difficult problem of political agitation by the more militant sections of their own party. Several Ministries felt compelled to arrest fellow party members under the hated Sections 124a (against seditious propaganda) and 144 (prohibition of meetings) of the Indian penal code which Congress itself had always vehemently denounced. In one case, a leading Congress Socialist was sentenced to six months in prison for a speech against recruiting. The left-wing leaders and the Congress rank and file naturally felt that it was intolerable for a Congress Government to prosecute a man for sedition when Congress itself was seditionist in that it stood for the termination of British rule. Another highly unpopular British law, which gives a magistrate the right to quell disturbances, was invoked by Congress Ministers in connection with strikes at Sholapur

and Cawnpore, an action which enraged the industrial workers. Antagonism toward the Congress Governments on the part of the industrial workers reached a particularly high point in Bombay in connection with the Bombay Industrial Disputes Bill passed by the provincial government in the latter part of 1938. This Bill imposed serious limitations on the workers' right to strike by requiring a four months interim period for the operation of conciliation machinery during which strikes were illegal.

The record of the Congress Ministries in fact suggests that the granting of provincial autonomy was a very shrewd gesture on the part of the British Government. For one thing, the advantages and comforts of their official positions naturally led many Congress Ministers to temper their nationalist fervor. For another, the Congress Governments were forced to assume responsibility for government within the framework of the British administrative machine, while the British continued to hold complete veto power and control over defense, foreign affairs, and federal finance. Thus the Congress Ministers were effectively prevented from any serious interference with the foundations of British power and from launching any basic reform measures, while at the same time their naturally conservative views on questions of agrarian and industrial policy led them to cooperate more and more with the British authorities and Indian propertied interests against the workers' and peasants' movements, and to use their new power for coercive measures against strikes and peasant unrest.

Another issue which aroused dissatisfaction among the rank and file and the left-wing groups was the failure of the Congress leadership to adopt a concrete policy with regard to

the people of the Indian States. For many years these 93 million subjects of the Indian Princes had remained isolated from the nationalist struggle in British India, and the Congress had voluntarily refrained from organizing political activity within the States. The policy of "non-interference" was apparently followed because Gandhi believed that the Congress should try to win the support of the Princes rather than their subjects. For example, he declared at the Round Table Conference in 1931 that, "up to now the Congress has endeavored to serve the Princes by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs . . . I feel and I know that they have the interests of their subjects at heart . . . I wish them well; I wish them all prosperity."

The Congress victories in the 1937 elections, however, coupled with the widespread popular agitation against the terms of the new Constitution, had inspired the beginnings of a popular movement in many of the Native States, demanding responsible government, civil liberties, and the abolition of forced labor and other forms of exploitation. These nascent movements had been met with stern repressive measures even in the most "progressive" States like Travancore and Mysore, and many individual Congress members, who had participated in organizing these popular movements, felt that the Congress should come out openly in support of the States Peoples' movement.

At the Haripura session of the Congress in February 1938, they were able to secure the passage of a resolution stating that:

"The Congress stands for the same political, social and economic freedom in the States as in the rest of India and considers the States as an integral part of India which cannot be separated.

The Purna Swaraj or complete independence which is the objective of Congress is for the whole of India, inclusive of the States, for the integrity and unity of India must be maintained in freedom as it has been maintained in subjection. The only kind of federation that can be acceptable to Congress is one in which the States participate as free units enjoying the same measure of democracy and freedom as in the rest of India."

Gandhi and his right-wing supporters, however, were still reluctant to come out with a direct attack on the Princes, whom they still hoped to win over to the side of Indian nationalism, and therefore added to this resolution the stipulation that "the internal struggle of the people in the States must not be made in the name of Congress. For this purpose independent organizations should be started and continued, where they exist already in the States."

Thus by 1939, the policy of the right-wing Congress leadership had aroused widespread dissatisfaction among the rank and file. The peasants were annoyed at the Congress Ministries' failure to take a strong stand on the question of agrarian reforms. The trade union members were discontented with the trend of Congress labor policy. And a large section of the membership was alarmed at the general slackening of the nationalist struggle, the refusal to take an active part in aiding the popular movements in the States, and the apparent drift toward a policy of compromise with the British Government on the constitutional issue.

This opposition came to a head when Subhas Chandra Bose, an outstanding left-wing leader in the Congress and president of the Congress in 1938, determined to run for reelection in 1939 against a candidate nominated by Gandhi and the right-wing members of the Congress Working Com-

mittee. Bose had long been one of the most turbulent and fiery figures in the Indian nationalist movement, and for years had denounced the conservative policies of the Gandhi-led group in Congress as futile and insipid. His passionate hatred of British rule overshadowed every other consideration, and his consuming ambition to drive the British out of India was later to land him in the Axis camp.[1] In campaigning for the presidency in 1939, Bose directed his attack against the "compromising tendencies" of the right-wing majority in the Congress Working Committee, and demanded the immediate launching of a nation-wide struggle against British rule. It should be noted that this campaign involved more than merely the presidency, inasmuch as the Congress Working Committee is not elected but appointed by the president. Thus the election of the president was the only opportunity for the Congress membership to express its views with regard to the Congress leadership as a whole. After a sharp debate, Bose was elected by the narrow margin of 1,575 to 1,376 votes, thereby becoming the first president of the Congress during the period of Gandhi's leadership to be elected without Gandhi's approval. His election, however, served merely to sharpen the rift between the right and left wing groups in Congress over the question of the proper tactics to be used in developing the nationalist movement.

Thus at its Tripuri meeting in March 1939, the Congress was faced with the threat of a serious internal split, but the breach was partially healed when, after sharp controversy, a

[1] Bose was imprisoned together with thousands of Congress leaders in 1940. He escaped from prison in 1941 and fled to Germany from where he broadcast inflammatory appeals to the Indian people to rise against the British. He was later reported killed in an airplane accident while en route to Tokyo, but his death has never been confirmed.

resolution was adopted reaffirming confidence in the leadership and policies of Gandhi and requiring the new president to nominate his Working Committee in accordance with Gandhi's wishes. As a concession to the left-wing groups, a resolution on the States Peoples' movement modified the policy of "non-intervention" laid down the year before by declaring that "the Congress has always possessed the right, as it is its duty, to guide the people of the States and lend them its influence. The great awakening that is taking place among the people may lead to a relaxation or a complete removal of the restraint which the Congress has imposed upon itself, thus resulting in the ever increasing identification of the Congress with the States Peoples." A resolution was also passed deploring the efforts of the Princes to seek British military and political aid and urging them to cast in their lot with their own people.

Tripuri did not, however, represent a permanent solution of the conflict within the Congress leadership. Bose and Gandhi could not agree on the composition of the new Working Committee, since Bose wanted "a composite cabinet commanding the confidence of the largest number of Congressmen possible and reflecting the composition of the general body of the Congress," while Gandhi wanted to see a homogeneous group consisting mainly of the right-wing veterans who had served on the Working Committee for the preceding ten years. In April, Bose relinquished office, Rajendra Prasad was elected president, and the old Working Committee was reinstated by vote of the All-India Congress Committee. Bose thereupon proceeded to organize his supporters into the Forward Bloc, the aims of which were declared to be to ensure that the Congress Ministries were

effectively subordinated to the provincial and All-India Congress Committees; to establish direct and close ties between the Congress and the working-class, peasant and States Peoples' organizations; to raise a permanent Volunteer Corps; and to intensify the national struggle against the Federal Constitution. Bose and his followers also maintained that the country was fit for a non-violent civil disobedience campaign, and was only waiting for a lead from Congress, while Gandhi adhered to the position that "Congress has ceased to be an effective vehicle for launching nation-wide *Satyagraha*."

Bose and his Forward Bloc were not able, however, to consolidate opposition to the policies of the dominant Congress leadership, and their efforts to organize protest demonstrations against the policies of the Congress Executive failed to elicit any great response. Thus the all-important question of the Congress policy with regard to the developing popular movements in India, and the tactics to be employed in the next stage of the nationalist struggle remained unsettled when the outbreak of war in September 1939 raised new and more urgent issues and brought to a head the gathering conflict between Indian nationalism and British rule.

The basic elements in the Indian political situation at the outbreak of the Second World War may therefore be summarized as follows. On the one hand, the Indian nationalist movement had developed a strong mass organization, the National Congress, which was pledged to work for complete independence and a democratic government in a united India including the people of the Indian States. The Congress was thus on record as unalterably opposed to communalism and other separatist tendencies, and also to the preservation of

the autocratic power of the Indian Princes. It was equally opposed to British constitutional policy as embodied in the 1935 Constitution, which it regarded as an attempt to utilize the two counterweights of communal separatism and the Princes to frustrate India's nationalist aims. The heterogeneous membership of the Congress, including representatives of every shade of political opinion, economic interest, and religious affiliation, had produced frequent internal dissension on questions of social policy and political tactics, but Congress had proved itself to be by far the most powerful and best organized political party in India with a vast following among the disenfranchised peasants and workers. Its major weakness lay in the contradictory position of the right-wing nationalists who had gained effective control of the party machinery, and who were constantly torn between their desire to oppose British domination and their fear of the consequences of a genuine people's revolutionary movement, with the result that at critical stages in the history of the nationalist struggle they acted as obstacles to rather than leaders of the Indian fight for freedom.

On the other hand, the policy of the British Government with regard to India had been modified to the extent that Dominion Status was accepted in principle as the ultimate goal for India, and a considerable measure of provincial autonomy had been granted under the 1935 Constitution. But the British still adhered to the thesis that Indians could not be given real self-government until after they had resolved their communal differences; that Britain was bound to protect Indian minorities from being subjected to majority rule; and that Britain's treaties with the Princes pledged her to protect their position against the demands of their peoples

for civil liberties and unity with people of British India. Here was an apparently unbridgeable gap between two diametrically opposed conceptions of India's political future. It remained to be seen whether the pressure of the war would serve to break this political deadlock.

PART V



INDIA AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

PART V



INDIA AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

CHAPTER I



WARTIME INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION IN INDIA

With the outbreak of the European war in September 1939, India entered a new phase in both her economic and political development. In the economic sphere, the character of the Second World War created a far more urgent demand for Indian industrial production than had the war of 1914–18. And the fact that Japan, a British ally in the last war, was now a military partner of Nazi Germany and a direct threat to Britain's Asiatic possessions and supply routes, made it doubly imperative that India should be developed as rapidly as possible into an industrial arsenal and supply base for British forces operating east of Suez. All the reasons, economic, strategic, and political, which had dictated a policy of official support for Indian industrialization in 1917, were even more compelling in 1939. For though some industrial progress had been made in the interim, it had been confined largely to textiles and other light industries. India still lacked basic heavy industries; was wholly dependent upon imports

for machinery and other factory equipment; produced no tanks, planes, or heavy guns; and had less than two million workers in modern factories and a far smaller number of skilled workers and technicians.

The urgent necessity of coordinating and stimulating industrial production in the British possessions east of Suez was somewhat belatedly recognized by the British Government in the autumn of 1940, when the Eastern Group Conference convened at New Delhi with the announced purpose of establishing a secure economic base for the defense of the Eastern Empire.[1] The Delhi Conference marked a radical departure from the traditional wartime role of the colonies and Dominions as suppliers of raw materials and foodstuffs to an industrial Britain. The fall of France, the bombing of British factories and the sinking of British ships, the spread of the war to the Mediterranean, and Japan's steady advance into Southeast Asia, all served to demonstrate the extreme vulnerability of an Empire whose industrial strength was so highly centralized and so dependent upon long lines of communication. To relieve the burden on British factories and shipping, it was essential to expand the industrial output of the eastern zone, and India and Australia were chosen as the most suitable for conversion into industrial bases. India's geographic position as well as her extensive material resources made her the ideal supply center for all strategic points between Egypt and Malaya.

By the beginning of 1942, the conversion of India into an

[1] The Conference, which convened on October 25, 1940, was attended by official delegations from the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Malaya, India, Burma, Ceylon, South Africa, East Africa, Rhodesia, Palestine, and Hongkong, representing a population of more than 500,000,000.

important industrial arsenal had made considerable progress. Pig iron production was up from 1,600,000 to 2,000,000 tons. Finished steel output had risen from 867,000 tons in 1939 to 1,250,000 tons in 1941, and was expected to reach 1,400,000 tons in 1942. Steel armor plate was being rolled at the Jamshedpur plant of the Tata Iron and Steel Company for the first time in Indian history, and Tata had a new plant under construction which would increase its steel capacity by some 200,000 tons a year. An extensive program for the expansion of Indian armament works, ordnance factories, explosives factories, and small arms plants had been initiated, which called for the provision of plant and machinery to enable India to produce a wide variety of armaments, including heavy caliber guns, bombs, light machine guns, and barrels for anti-aircraft guns, as well as increased amounts of high explosives, high-grade steels, nonferrous alloys, etc.

During 1941 a small beginning was made in the production of the simpler types of machine tools and machinery, and an official report stated that over 280 new items of "engineering stores" were being manufactured in India, ranging from small tools and machine parts to heavy caliber guns, torpedo boats, and degaussing cables. The production of drugs and medical supplies, leather goods, hardware, cutlery, glassware, and optical goods had been substantially increased, and a wide variety of manufactured articles previously imported were being produced in India for the first time, e.g. benzol, rubber goods, binoculars, lubricating oils, lead pipes and sheets, chloroform, oxygen apparatus, and many other items.

There were also the beginnings of a heavy chemical industry in India. The Alkali and Chemical Corporation of India and Tata Chemicals, Ltd. had plants in the process of

construction in 1941, and they and Imperial Chemicals of India, Ltd. had begun the production of sulphuric acid, synthetic ammonia, caustic soda, chlorine, bleaching powder, and bichromates. Imported aluminum was being treated in Indian plants, and it was reported that by the end of 1942 Indian bauxite would be extracted, treated, and fabricated locally. The production of airplanes, tanks, and armored vehicles, however, was limited by India's complete dependence upon imported engines.

India's older industries, notably textiles, had also made an important contribution to the Empire war effort. The cotton and woolen textile industries in 1941 produced 324,000,000 yards of cloth for garments, and nine factories were turning out uniforms at the rate of five million a month. India was also supplying huge quantities of blankets to all the countries of the eastern zone, as well as tentage of all kinds. Army boots were being produced at the rate of three million pairs a year, and the jute industry had filled government orders for one billion sandbags.

Despite this industrial progress, however, Indian manufacturers complained vigorously that the British authorities were impeding Indian industrialization by discrimination against Indian concerns, and by refusing to give financial assistance to the establishment of Indian-controlled industries. During the meeting of the Central Legislative Assembly in November 1940, the Government's policy with regard to aircraft manufacture, the automobile industry, and shipbuilding was vehemently attacked. It was claimed that Indian interests had offered, at the outset of the war, to construct an aircraft factory without any government subsidy, but that the project had been delayed for fifteen months by the Gov-

ernment's refusal to agree to buy planes. It was also alleged that the British Government, despite its urgent need for shipping, was blocking the establishment of Indian-owned shipbuilding yards, and that it had also opposed the construction of an Indian automotive manufacturing plant.

In response to these charges the British Government issued an official communique on December 16, 1940, declaring that the Government was "very sympathetic" to these projects, but that there were "considerable difficulties" in the way of their accomplishment. There was, however, considerable evidence that British policy during the first two years of the war continued to be dominated by the desire to retain a controlling position in the Indian market and over Indian production and trade, and was therefore opposed to any rapid or extensive growth of Indian-controlled heavy industries. Production of military supplies was, of course, greatly increased as compared with pre-war years, but this increase was still far out of proportion both to India's potential resources and to her vast needs. British official reports stressed that by 1941 India was about 90% self-sufficient in military supplies, but these "supplies" consisted almost entirely of clothing, small ammunition, foodstuffs, tents, blankets, etc. Only the smallest beginnings had been made in the development of the metallurgical, chemical, and other heavy industries for which India possessed all the necessary raw materials, and nothing effective had been done to eliminate the twin bottlenecks of a lack of machinery and an acute shortage of skilled labor which continued to cripple India's efforts toward industrial expansion.

The fall of Singapore and the rapid Japanese advance into Burma, menacing the supply lines to China via the Burma

Road, gave tremendous added importance to India's industrial capacity as a supply base for China as well as the Near East. The fact that India's war production had become a matter of immediate concern to the United Nations, was demonstrated by the despatch of an American technical mission to India in March 1942 to aid in developing "the industrial resources of India as a supply base for the armed forces of the United Nations in the Near East and the Far East." Headed by Henry F. Grady, former Assistant Secretary of State in charge of trade relations, the mission included Arthur W. Harrington, president of the Society of Automotive Engineers, to advise on the production of armored vehicles and automotive equipment; Harry E. Beyster, president of the Beyster Engineering Company, to advise on the organization of Indian plants for war production; and Dirk Dekker, director of personnel and training of the Illinois Steel Corporation, to aid in the training of semi-skilled and skilled workers. At the same time, Colonel Louis Johnson, former Assistant Secretary of War, was sent to New Delhi as President Roosevelt's personal representative.

Mr. Grady's report, submitted to President Roosevelt on June 8, was kept confidential, and therefore no detailed account of the mission's activities is available. But Mr. Grady was quoted in the press to the effect that Indian production of certain types of war supplies—rifles, shells, armored bodies, etc.—could be expanded sufficiently to supply all Allied requirements in that part of the world, thus conserving valuable shipping space needed elsewhere. Mr. Grady stated that his report made numerous recommendations both as to what the Government of India could do and how the United States might help in supplying such vital necessities as machine

tools. He commented on the good transportation system that exists in India, her extensive hydro-electric power potential, and the high quality of the Indian workmen.

Had Mr. Grady's mission not coincided with that of Sir Stafford Cripps, the economic side of the Indian question would have received the press coverage and attention it deserved. But when Mr. Grady said that the Indians made excellent soldiers, that a large army could be created if the necessary equipment were available, and that though recruiting was good, it would be even better if it were encouraged, he indicated the close connection that exists between Indian industrialization and the political deadlock between the Indian National Congress and the British Government. We must therefore turn now to a consideration of the political developments which led up to the despatch of the historic Cripps Mission to India in March, 1942.

CHAPTER II



POLITICAL TENSION PRECEDING PEARL HARBOR

THE OUTBREAK of the European war in September 1939 marked the beginning of a period of acute political tension in India, although this became a matter of urgent concern to the world at large only when the war spread to the Pacific, and India became both a key strategic area for the United Nations and the object of a direct threat from the advancing forces of Japan. Political conflict in India was not, of course, a war-born phenomenon, but rather the continuation of the long and bitter struggle between the Indian nationalist movement and the British Government over the issue of Indian self-government. But this struggle entered a new and more serious phase when, within a few hours after the outbreak of war, the British Government proclaimed India a belligerent without consulting any representatives of the Indian people. A Government of India Amending Act was rushed through the British Parliament, empowering the Viceroy to suspend the "provincial autonomy" provisions of the 1935 Constitu-

tion, and the Defense of India Ordinance of September 3, 1939, established the power of the British Government in India to rule by decree, to prohibit meetings and other forms of propaganda, and to arrest without warrant. Such stringent regulations were laid down, and such severe penalties imposed for any violation, that the National Council of Civil Liberties in England felt compelled to protest that these regulations "must be mainly intended to defend India against the Indians."

The Indian National Congress promptly protested against these autocratic measures by a Government which had proclaimed itself the champion of democracy and freedom. The Congress statement, issued on September 14th, "unhesitatingly condemned" German aggression and expressed sympathy with those who opposed it, but reiterated that "the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy." The Congress therefore invited the British Government "to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and . . . in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people?"

The Moslem League, on the other hand, authorized its president, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, to give assurances of cooperation in the British war effort, provided that Moslem interests were guaranteed against encroachment by the "Hindu majority," and thereby gave the British authorities an excellent

excuse for deferring any concrete concessions on the grounds that Congress and the League must first arrive at a solution of their differences. On October 17th, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, issued a White Paper which implicitly accepted the League's claim to speak for the Moslems of India. This White Paper referred at length to the promises made in earlier years that the ultimate goal of British policy was self-government or Dominion Status for India, but made no reference to democracy or freedom as war aims. Instead, the Viceroy offered to establish a consultative body, representing the princes and the major political parties and religious communities, to "advise" on the conduct of the war. Subsequently, the Viceroy announced that in addition to this consultative body, he was prepared to add a number of Indians to his Executive Council, provided that Mr. Jinnah and the Congress leaders could arrive at "a sufficient resolution of [their] differences to make the devising of a scheme of harmonious working at the Center practicable."

The Moslem League noted "with satisfaction that His Majesty's Government recognize the fact that the All-India Moslem League truly represents the Moslems of India and can speak on their behalf," while the Congress leaders denied the right of the League to speak for all Moslems, and protested that the "communal issue" was entirely irrelevant to the question of Indian independence.

Resignation of the Congress Ministries

It was only after the issuance of the White Paper that the Congress abandoned hope of any immediate British concessions, and called upon the Congress Provincial Ministries to

resign, on the grounds that to cooperate with Great Britain in the war would be an endorsement of the imperialist policy under which India herself had been handicapped. On March 1, 1940, the Congress Working Committee issued a strong statement declaring that "Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of British imperialism, and dominion status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India . . . The people of India alone can properly shape their Constitution and determine their relations with other countries through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage." This resolution was later approved by a vote of 2,500 to 15 at the plenary session of the Congress at Ramgarh on March 20, at which the Working Committee was authorized to take all steps it considered necessary to implement the resolution, including the immediate resumption of mass civil disobedience.

Mr. Jinnah acted quickly in an effort to forestall this possibility, since a mass civil disobedience campaign which would unite Hindu and Moslem peasants and workers in a common struggle, would effectively undermine the power of the "communal" politicians to aggravate and exploit religious differences and would therefore be a decided threat to Jinnah's own political ambitions. During the previous autumn, the British-owned *Calcutta Statesman*, commenting on the loyal support of the Moslem League, had suggested editorially that "the autonomous [Moslem League] Governments of the Punjab and Bengal will take on new importance, and may well attract new administrative areas to themselves . . . The problem of administration in wartime might be simplified . . . if the Punjab were made responsible for the administration of the Frontier Province and the

United Provinces, and Bengal were made responsible for Assam and Bihar." Mr. Jinnah, at the annual meeting of the Moslem League held shortly after that of the Congress, elaborated on this theme, and put forward his "Pakistan" plan for the partition of India into Moslem and non-Moslem states. Under this plan, most of northern India would be separated into a form of Indian "Ulster" including the Northwest Frontier Province (92% Moslem), Baluchistan (87½%), the Punjab (56½%), the State of Jimmu and Kashmir (77%), and Bengal (55%).

This plan was immediately denounced by nationalist elements among the Moslem community, and a number of important members of the League resigned. Jinnah's opponents pointed out that the Moslems were not a separate nation or race, that they did not have a separate language, and that no provision was envisaged for the non-Moslem minorities in the proposed Moslem state, or for the Moslem minority in the non-Moslem state. Jinnah never offered an adequate answer to these objections, but he had accomplished his main purpose which was to put the Congress leaders on the defensive and divert their attention from an independence campaign to combating the partition propaganda of the League.

Mr. Jinnah's maneuvers, however, were not the chief factors responsible for checking the civil disobedience campaign; more important were the downfall of the Chamberlain Government and the opening of the Nazi blitzkrieg. On May 20, Nehru declared that "launching a civil disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle would be an act derogatory to India's honor," while Gandhi announced that "we do not seek independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence." In

July 1940, the All-India Congress Committee, meeting at Poona in Gandhi's absence, went so far as to state that the principle of non-violence did not apply to international disputes, and offered to cooperate actively with Britain in the defense of India if a national government were formed and a definite date for independence set. In response, the British Government, on August 8, issued a lengthy statement of its aims and policies in India, declaring once more that the ultimate goal of British policy was "free and equal partnership" for India in the British Commonwealth, under a constitution framed by Indians, "subject to the fulfillment of our obligations for the protection of minorities, . . . and of our treaty obligations to the Indian States . . ." For the present, the Government proposed an enlargement of the Viceroy's Executive Council to include "a certain number of representative Indians," and the formation of a War Advisory Council.

Continued Political Deadlock

Since this in no way met the demands of the nationalist leaders, the Congress withdrew the offer of cooperation and invited Gandhi to resume its leadership. Gandhi was still unwilling to call for mass civil disobedience, on the grounds that it would seriously embarrass an embattled Britain. Instead, he adopted a new tactic of "limited" or "individual" civil disobedience, consisting chiefly of speeches and other mild demonstrations against the war. Gandhi himself was sole arbiter as to who should break the law, and the local police and magistrate were given advance notice of the place and hour. At the appointed time, the civil resister started his speech, was promptly arrested, and rushed through a formal

trial. This campaign started on October 21, 1940, when Gandhi's first sacrificial victim, Vinoba Bhave, was arrested and imprisoned. A week later Nehru was arrested, and from then on the arrests became a daily occurrence with several Congress members demonstrating in different parts of the country simultaneously. By the summer of 1941 some 37,000 Congress leaders were imprisoned.

In the meantime, certain Indian liberals, led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, endeavored to break the political deadlock by proposing a temporary formula which would enable Indians to participate more actively in the war against fascism. On March 13, 1941, a conference of these moderate leaders was held in Bombay under Sapru's chairmanship, and passed a resolution calling for the reconstruction of the Viceroy's Executive Council as follows:

"The whole Executive Council should consist of non-official Indians drawn from important elements in the public life of the country. This would naturally involve the transfer of all portfolios, including the vital ones of finance and defense, to Indians. . . .

"In regard to all imperial and international matters, the reconstructed Government should be treated on the same footing as the Dominion Governments."

These proposals were considered by the British Government, and on April 23, Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, replied to them in a debate on India in the House of Commons, in which he stated that, apart from other objections, the fact that the Moslem League would not be willing to associate itself with this new form of Executive Council would render the latter so unrepresentative as to be useless. This attitude irritated both England and Indian

liberal opinion, and Mr. Amery's implication that the League and Moslem opinion were identical, merely strengthened the Indian belief that the British Government was using the League as a tool to split and weaken the nationalist movement.

Two months later, however, the British Government made another move designed to allay Indian discontent. On July 22, 1941, it was announced that without delaying further in the hope of securing cooperation from the Moslem League and the Congress, the Government intended to go ahead with the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council and the establishment of an Advisory Council, as proposed in the British offers of October 1939 and August 1940. In the Executive Council, three previously joint portfolios were separated and two new ones created, making it possible to appoint five non-official Indians, thus giving the Council a non-official majority for the first time.[1] The new Indian members, however, were men known for their loyalty to the British administration, and represented neither the Congress nor the Moslem League. Furthermore, the Council continued to be responsible solely to the Viceroy, who retained his power of veto over all acts of the Central Legislature, and the two key portfolios of Finance and Defense remained in the hands of British officials. The new consultative body, the National Defense Council, was also announced on July 22nd. This group had a membership of 31, of which 22 were from British India (20 of them Indians) and the balance from the Indian States. Its membership included the four Moslem Provincial Prime Ministers from Bengal, Assam, Sind, and

[1] Prior to this expansion, the Council consisted of seven members in addition to the Viceroy, of which three were Indians.

the Punjab; Dr. Ambedkar as the representative of Labor, and a number of other prominent moderate leaders. The Council was to be purely advisory, and to meet periodically under the chairmanship of the Viceroy.

These measures did nothing to break the political deadlock between the British Government and the nationalists who adhered to their demand for a representative national government responsible to the elected members of the Central Legislature. The imprisonment of Congress and trade union leaders continued, and India seethed with resentment and discontent, while the British position in Europe, the Near East, and Asia grew increasingly precarious. In August, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at sea and drew up the Atlantic Charter, with its pledge "to respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live; and . . . to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." But on his return to London, Mr. Churchill let it be known that the Charter would apply only to those people who had lost their liberties under Hitler, and that "the joint declaration does not qualify in any way the various statements which have been made from time to time, about development of constitutional government in India, Burma or any other parts of the British Empire."

This statement aroused passionate indignation among all sections of Indian opinion. Typical reactions of moderate Indian leaders outside the National Congress were those of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Moslem Premier of the Punjab, and Dr. M. R. Jayakar, Supreme Court Justice and one of India's leading Liberals. Said Sir Sikander, "If the British Prime Minister could see his way to make a declaration to the satis-

faction of the Indians, I visualize that practically the whole of India would come forward to help in our war effort and consequently all the elements that matter will be represented on the body constituted to frame a constitution for India. . . . I had, in the first place, asked for a declaration setting out in simple and unambiguous language, the future status of India, namely free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth within a specified time . . . If the British have any statesmanship left in them they should at once make the declaration I have suggested. In the absence of this declaration India should present a united front . . . Mr. Churchill's statement is the biggest rebuff India has ever received . . ."

In a similar vein, Dr. Jayakar declared that "the British Government have done nothing to make us feel that this war is ours too . . . They care more for India's men, money, and materials than for her moral and spiritual support in the war. England would have done far better if she had appealed to India's love of freedom and democracy rather than to fear of dreadful consequences of a Nazi victory. It was the slave owners' argument and naturally India was indifferent to the outcome of the war as long as she did not stand to gain anything as a result of the war . . ."

By the late autumn of 1941, it had become obvious that something must be done quickly to improve the Indian political situation, and enlist the wholehearted cooperation of the Indian people in the war. Germany was advancing steadily into the Soviet Union, and a German drive through the Near East was an imminent possibility. Japan had consolidated her position in Indo-China, and was clearly preparing for a further move into Thailand which would bring her to the borders of Malaya. The mobilization of India's vast resources

and manpower had thus become a matter of such urgent military necessity that even the London *Times* spoke in a new vein on the Indian question on November 18th. "Nothing could be lost," wrote the *Times*, "and much sympathy might be won by a determined and understanding effort to bring more of the Indian leaders, including those now and recently in active opposition, into a responsible share in the tasks of government and in the solution of the problems—military, social and economic—which weigh heavily on India at the present time. Such a policy would give an uplift to British prestige throughout the empire and the English-speaking world and, more important still, it would discharge an obligation which Britain owes to India, its people, and itself." Early in December, shortly before Pearl Harbor, Nehru and several other Congress leaders were released from jail, and negotiations were resumed.

CHAPTER III



THE CRIPPS MISSION

JAPAN's entry into the war, and the rapid Japanese successes in Hongkong, Malaya, and Netherlands India, enormously intensified the importance of India in the United Nations' war effort, and events moved rapidly. Early in January, Gandhi resigned his leadership of the Congress in favor of Nehru,[1] apparently paving the way for active cooperation in the British war effort, provided some solution of the political deadlock could be found. The Congress Working Committee, meeting at Wardha on January 16 to consider its policy towards the war, adopted a resolution declaring that "the sympathy of the Congress must inevitably lie with people who are the object of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom, but only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defense of the country on a national basis and be a help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war."

[1] Gandhi had never rejoined the Congress after his resignation in 1934, but though technically not a member, was tacitly accepted as the leader of the Congress during the period 1939-1941.

On February 15, the disastrous campaign in Malaya ended with the fall of Singapore amidst a storm of popular criticism in England over the "bungling" by the Singapore authorities and their shortsighted attitude towards mobilizing the Chinese and Malayan population. With Japanese forces driving on into Burma and threatening China's vital supply lines via Rangoon and the Burma Road, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek visited India, and, after a week's conference with Indian nationalist leaders, issued a strong statement urging that the British Government, "without waiting for any demand on the part of the Indian people, as speedily as possible give them real political power so that they will be in a position to develop further their spiritual and material strength. The Indian people thus would realize that their participation in the war was not merely to aid anti-aggression nations . . . but was also the turning point in their struggle for their own freedom."

On February 22, the day after the Chiang statement, Prime Minister Churchill announced a sweeping revision of the Government, with Sir Stafford Cripps joining the War Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and Spokesman for the Government in the House of Commons. Since Cripps had long been known as a staunch advocate of Dominion Status for India, this appointment was universally hailed as indicative of a new and more constructive approach to the Indian political situation, although the enthusiasm over Cripps' entry into the Cabinet was somewhat dimmed by the retention of Mr. Amery as Secretary of State for India. Mr. Amery, it may be noted, is the man who told the House of Commons in 1931 that Britain should not condemn Japan for "defending herself against Chinese Nationalism," because to do so would be

to condemn British policy in India and Egypt, and his record in the India Office had earned him the cordial dislike of virtually all sections of Indian opinion.

In the days immediately following the Cabinet reorganization, news despatches from London reported that a plan for India was being formulated which would represent a substantial advance toward Indian self-government. This plan was said to involve, first, the merger of the India Office with the Dominion Affairs Office; second, giving representatives of the Indian nationalist movement the portfolios of Defense and Finance in the Viceroy's Executive Council. Inasmuch as it was subsequently announced by Sir Stafford Cripps that Chiang Kai-shek visited India at the request of Prime Minister Churchill, it seems reasonable to assume that when Chiang made his statement regarding "real political power" for the Indian people, some such plan was definitely contemplated. Subsequently, however, a hitch developed, apparently because certain conservative members of the Cabinet felt the plan went too far, and reliable sources from London reported that the idea of giving the portfolios of Defense and Finance to Indian nationalist leaders had been dropped. Finally, on March 11, Churchill announced that the War Cabinet had agreed on a plan for India, and that Sir Stafford Cripps had consented to go to India to ascertain whether this plan would secure a "reasonable and practical" measure of acceptance, and "thus promote the concentration of all Indian thought and energies" on defense against Japan.

In summary then, the spread of war to the Pacific and the Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia had brought India into the front line of battle. She had become the keystone

of Allied defense in the Indian Ocean, the principal route for supplies from Britain and the United States to China, and a vitally important source of manpower and war materials for Allied forces in the Near and Far East. As a result, a solution of the political deadlock which would enlist full Indian participation in the war effort had become a matter of urgent necessity for the United Nations. The Indian National Congress had taken the stand that India could fight effectively only as a free nation; that only an Indian Government could or would mobilize the Indian people for resistance and convince them that they had a genuine stake in the war. In support of this contention, the nationalist leaders contrasted the record of China with that of the colonial areas of Southeast Asia where the native population had remained largely passive when their countries were overrun. The Congress demands were (1) immediate acknowledgment of Indian independence, to be effected at a fixed date, and (2) the formation of an interim provisional National Indian Government commanding the confidence of the elected members of the Central Legislature.

In England, opinion on the Indian question was divided. An editorial published in the well-known liberal weekly, the *New Statesman and Nation*, for February 28th, under the title of "An Independent India," spoke for the vast majority of the English people when it emphasized the need for "the wholehearted participation of a free Indian nation if this struggle is to be won." It went on to declare that "what is offered today can and should be a temporary solution, subject to future negotiation when peace brings leisure to think and construct . . . But it is generally realized that

everything will turn on our willingness to give India at once a genuine National Government to lead her people in their struggle against the Axis for their own freedom. Indians will rightly refuse to be impressed by the admission of some gentlemen with brown skins to the Viceroy's Council, so long as we keep in our own official hands the portfolios of Defense, Finance and Home Affairs (i.e. police) . . . It is not for us to nominate India's leaders. If we intend to enlist her in the battle for her own freedom, we must leave it to her own people to choose their governors. We need hardly add that the ranks of the army must be opened wide to the whole nation, and no longer reserved for our select 'martial races' . . . We doubt whether the main body of Moslems would follow Mr. Jinnah in obstructing a genuine offer of national independence. In the past all our offers were qualified by reservations which in effect enabled and even invited the minorities to put their veto on any advance. What Indians chiefly mean by 'independence' is that we should cease to play this traditional game of divide to rule. . . . To sum up, we are facing a wholly new and unforeseen situation. Can the Chinese and Indian peoples together, with the technical aid of the Americans and ourselves, cope with the military power of Japan and the Axis? On that, in the East, rests the hope of victory. The political problem is then to mobilize them both . . . in such a way as to draw from their full contribution to the common effort. . . . We are in a crisis in which we cannot consider our own preferences. The details should as far as possible be postponed until after the armistice. This can be done provided we concede the reality of power today, with the certainty with our good will of independence tomorrow."

The views expressed in this editorial, however, were not those of the British Government or, presumably, of British conservative opinion in general. Consciously or unconsciously, their attitude appears to have been determined by the conviction that to retain India within the Empire was all-important, and that to give the Indian people control over such vital matters as defense and finance would jeopardize this aim. Their hope, therefore, was somehow to win Indian support and to secure India's voluntary acceptance of the status of a British nation, while retaining complete political and military power in their own hands, at least for the duration of the war. This was the task which Sir Stafford Cripps was called on to perform.

The British Government's Proposals

The proposals of the British War Cabinet, as announced by Sir Stafford Cripps at New Delhi on March 29th, were as follows:

"(a) Immediately upon cessation of hostilities, steps will be taken to set up in India, in a manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

"(b) Provision shall be made as set out below for participation of Indian States in the constitution-making body.

"His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed, subject only to:

"Firstly, the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decided.

"With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

"Secondly, the signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. The treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands; it will make provision in accordance with undertakings given by His Majesty's Government for the protection of racial and religious minorities; but it will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth.

"Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

"The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities. Immediately upon the result being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the lower houses of provincial legislatures shall as a single electoral college proceed to the election of a constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation.

"This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral college. Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members.

"During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government

must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defense of India as a part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the cooperation of the peoples of India.

"His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth, and of the United Nations.

"Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of the task which is vital for the future freedom of India."

On the same day, Sir Stafford elaborated on these proposals in a radio address to the Indian people in which he devoted particular attention to the reasons for allowing any Province or Indian State to refuse to adhere to the proposed Indian Union. He pointed out that the proposed constitution-making body "will have as its object the framing of a single constitution for the whole of India—that is, of British India together with such of the Indian States as may decide to join in." But, argued Sir Stafford, "we realize this very simple fact—if you want to persuade a number of people who are inclined to be antagonistic to enter the same room, it's unwise to tell them that once they go in there is no way out. . . . It's much wiser to tell them they can go in, and if they find they cannot come to a common decision, then there is nothing to prevent those who wish from leaving again by another door. They are much more likely all to go in if they have knowledge that they can, by their free will, go out again if they cannot agree. Well, that's what

we say to the Provinces of India. Come together to frame a common constitution. If you find after all your discussion . . . that you cannot overcome your differences, and that some Provinces are still not satisfied with the constitution, then such Provinces can go out and remain out if they wish, and just the same degree of self-government and freedom will be available for them as for the Union itself—that is to say, complete self-government. . . .

"In the past," continued Sir Stafford, "we have waited for different Indian communities to come to a common decision as to how a new constitution for a self-government of India should be framed. And because there has been no agreement among the Indian leaders the British Government has been accused by some of using this fact to delay the granting of Indian freedom. We are now giving the lead that has been asked for, and it is in the hands of the Indians, and Indians only, whether they will accept that lead and so attain their own freedom. If they fail to accept this opportunity the responsibility for that failure must rest with them."

Sir Stafford was also emphatic on the necessity for the British Government's retaining full control and responsibility for the conduct of the defense of India, with the Commander-in-Chief remaining as Defense Minister in the Viceroy's Council. "If His Majesty's Government are to take full responsibility for the conduct of the naval, military, and air defense of India, as it is their duty to do, then the defense of India must be dealt with by them as part of the world war effort on which they are now engaged, with the direction of that defense directly in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief under the War Cabinet and their

highest staff officers." To meet the Indian demand for a voice in the conduct of the war, however, the British Government had "invited the appointment of a representative Indian to the War Cabinet and to the Pacific Council of the United Nations." In Sir Stafford's view, "nothing further or more complete could be done toward the immediate realization of the just terms and demands of the Indian people." The British proposals were "definite and precise," and he warned that if they were rejected by Indian leaders, "there will be neither the time nor the opportunity to reconsider this matter till after the war."

The British Government's plan for India was, indeed, far more specific than the previous vague pledges regarding Indian self-government at some future, unspecified date. It was, as Mr. Gandhi is reported to have said, a "post-dated cheque" in contrast to the undated promissory notes which had been given India from time to time during the preceding 25 years. The plan set a definite date for India's transition to full Dominion Status. It provided for a constitution to be drafted by representatives of the Indian people, instead of by the British Government as in the past. It envisaged India as a Dominion "in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs."

There were, however, a number of points in the plan which were disappointing both to those who were primarily interested in enlisting the active support of the Indian people in the war, and also to those who wished to see India aided in achieving real national unity and a political structure which would pave the way for rapid social and economic progress. First and foremost, was the lack of any specific provision for immediate Indian participation in the

central government or in the defense of the country. Prime Minister Churchill has expressly stated that the aim of the plan was "to rally all forces of Indian life to guard their land from the menace of the invader," and this was certainly a matter of the most urgent importance to the United Nations. Yet the plan made no definite proposals for responsible Indian participation in the defense effort, or for organizing and arming the Indian people for resistance, or for the rapid expansion of key Indian war industries.

In the second place, the section of the plan dealing with India's post-war transition to Dominion Status contained certain provisions which seemed likely to impede the achievement of national unity, accentuate communal tension, and perpetuate forces of social reaction and political autocracy. One was the provision granting each Province and the several hundreds of Indian States the right to refuse adherence to the proposed Indian Union, and providing that any province or provinces might set up a separate Dominion or Dominions, thereby creating a series of states within states. Another was the stipulation that the participation of the Indian States in the proposed Constituent Assembly should be through representatives *appointed* by the Princes, which meant that the 93,000,000 people in the States would have no voice in the framing of the constitution or in deciding whether or not the States should join the new Union.

As we have seen, the British Government justified this right of secession on the grounds that it would leave the Indian people entirely free to settle their communal differences in any way they chose, and that no large minority group would be compelled to accept a constitution of which

it did not approve or have the power to veto a general settlement for the majority. This contention sounded admirably democratic in principle, but when applied to the Indian situation, and particularly as applied to the Indian States, it would have made it extremely difficult for India to attain either unity, democracy, or real independence.

With respect to British India, the right of secession would presumably have had less serious results, for according to the British plan, the decision as to adherence or secession was to be made by representatives elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies. Now, as we have seen, the Moslem League had not been able in the 1937 elections to win a majority in the Legislatures even of those Provinces which are predominantly Moslem, and there was no evidence that the League had substantially increased its following since the adoption of its "Pakistan" program in 1940. The Northwest Frontier Province (92% Moslem) was solidly behind the Congress. The Moslem Premier of the Punjab, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, had broken with Jinnah on the question of partition, and the Moslem Premier of Sind (73% Moslem) had recently declared that a large section of the Moslem community did not support the League's partition plan. Even in Bengal, where the League had its strongest following, the Moslem population was by no means united on the partition issue. Thus there is reason to assume that the British proposal would not have led to a division of India on Hindu-Moslem lines.

With regard to the Indian States, however, the right of non-adherence, coupled with the provision that the appointees of the Princes would be entitled to speak for one-quar-

ter of the Indian people, undoubtedly constituted a serious obstacle both to the attainment of any form of democratic government for India as a whole, and also to the establishment of a genuinely independent India. The great majority of the Princes are petty rulers who owe their continued existence and their enjoyment of absolute power over their subjects entirely to the protection of the British Government, and it seems highly unlikely that these puppet princelings would voluntarily accept a constitution based on the principles of popular government and civil liberties when they had the alternative of retaining their present relationship to the British Crown. Obviously, if large numbers of the States refused adherence to the new Union it would create an impossible administrative problem for the new Indian Government, to say nothing of their possible use as instruments for the maintenance of indirect British control over large sections of the country. Moreover, it was incompatible with the principles of the Indian nationalists that the 93,000,000 people of the States should be denied any share in the framing of the Indian constitution.

One easily overlooked point about the British proposals was their assumption that Dominion Status within the British Empire represents the most that India should hope for, and is tantamount to complete political freedom, a view which Sir Stafford Cripps himself had always maintained, on the grounds that if India were given her freedom she would have no alternative but to return immediately to the fold of the British Commonwealth of Nations. In view of the successful development of the Dominion theory in the case of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, it is perhaps

natural that even the more progressive sections of British opinion should sincerely believe that it is the appropriate solution for India. Yet the analogy is not a correct one, for India is not a country inhabited by English citizens who have settled overseas. She has no natural political, racial, or sentimental ties with England. In future, the Indian people, as Nehru has said, will be "inevitably drawn to neighbors, with whom they have had thousands of years of cultural contact, China, Burma, . . . Iran," and there is no reason to assume that Dominion Status within the British Empire would aid India in developing her cultural, economic, and political relations with her Asiatic neighbors. It is understandable, therefore, that Indian nationalists refuse to accept the thesis that Dominion Status within the British Empire is synonymous with complete freedom, or as the natural goal toward which the Indian people should aspire.

The chief weakness in the British plan, however, had nothing to do with its post-war provisions. The issue of primary importance was that India's vast resources in manpower and materials should be mobilized as fully and as rapidly as possible for the war against the Axis. All other considerations were subordinate to this one all-important need. The major criterion by which the British plan had to be judged, therefore, was whether it would accomplish this task. And it undeniably failed to meet this test. It ignored completely the two basic questions of arming the Indian people and developing Indian heavy industries, and it gave India's leaders neither the opportunity nor the incentive to become partners in the struggle against fascist aggression.

Lord Halifax on the Indian Question

On April 7, 1942, while Cripps was negotiating with the various Indian leaders in New Delhi, the British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax, made an extremely important address on the Indian situation at the Town Hall in New York City, which was broadcast on a coast-to-coast hook-up. As a former British Foreign Secretary and a former Viceroy of India, Lord Halifax is exceptionally well-qualified to present the official British attitude toward India. Certainly, such a detailed statement on a topic of such urgent importance could not have been made without the previous knowledge and approval of the British Government, and in view of the speaker, the timing, and the publicity given to the address, it must be taken as an expression of the ideas which formed the basis of the British Government's proposals submitted to India by Sir Stafford Cripps. No analysis of the Cripps Mission would be complete, therefore, without at least some mention of the Halifax statement,[2] and the speech furthermore serves as an excellent summary of virtually all the aspects of British policy in India which have been discussed in the preceding sections of this book.

In his introductory remarks, Lord Halifax dealt at some length with the contrasts and variety—geographical, racial, linguistic, and religious—to be found in India. He stressed the fact that India's people come from many racial stocks and differ greatly in temperament and social philosophy. "More than 200 languages are spoken in India," and the

[2] The full text of the Halifax statement appeared in the *New York Times*, April 8, 1942, and in *Amerasia*, May 1942.

only language which educated Indians know in addition to their own is English. India is a land of many religious faiths, and the influence of religion is much "wider, deeper, and more pervasive than in the West," and the name of religion is "often invoked for causes that have scant right to claim it." Lord Halifax then described the Mogul invasion of India which confronted Hinduism with the challenge of the Moslem faith. "The outlook of Islam, practical though intensely religious, realist, democratic, is poles asunder from that of Hinduism, mystic, introspective, and bringing all the institutions of life under rigid regulation." There is a "fundamental antipathy" between the two religions that cannot be easily reconciled.

With the weakening of the Mogul Empire in the 17th century, India fell victim to disruptive forces from within and outside her borders, and "from such a contest for the body of a stricken empire, it fell to the British to re-establish peace by force of arms. The East India Company . . . gradually found itself driven by increasing lawlessness into the assumption of more direct responsibility for government. . . . That is the story of how the British came to be in India." And what have been the aims of Britain in India? Lord Halifax defined them as follows: to give India unity and security, both internal and external; to raise the general level of social and economic standards; and to develop India's political life. "We have been trying within the British Empire to foster the creation of a United India, sufficiently at one within herself in respect to those fundamentals on which every nation-state must rest, to permit us to devolve upon her people the control of their own affairs."

India's political development has been enormously influ-

enced by the spread of English law and English education. "In countless directions the outlook of her sons and daughters has been not only changed, but formed, by what they read in the tongue that Shakespeare and Milton spoke." Thus the British themselves taught India the ideals of self-government and freedom, and the growth of Indian nationalism may in fact be considered a tribute to the beneficence of British rule. According to Lord Halifax, each successive constitutional reform measure bestowed on India by Britain has marked a conscious advance from dependence to complete autonomy, culminating in the Act of 1935. Lord Halifax gave a brief summary of the provisions of this "latest and greatest enactment" to show that "the degree of self-government which India can enjoy under the Act of 1935 is no mean thing," compared with what she enjoyed during the earlier period of British rule, or with what she might expect under Nazi or Japanese domination. One section of this Act proposed "an All-India federation, covering States and provinces, with an All-India Cabinet under the Viceroy, who would simply retain final responsibility for defense and foreign policy and certain aspects of finance." This part of the Act was not in force, explained Lord Halifax, because "it had not yet been possible to reach an agreement between the Indian States, the Moslems and Congress Party, as to the relative position and strength of each in the new federal order." The other part of the Act, however, which came into force on April 1, 1937, set up new and liberal constitutions for the eleven British Indian Provinces. Indian voters, Indian Legislatures, Indian Cabinets and Indian Premiers were given entire control over all the things that touch the daily life of India most closely—law

and order, finance, health and education, and, perhaps most important of all, irrigation."

Lord Halifax then reviewed the stages by which India had reached her present level of development, and the great material benefits which she had derived from the British connection. India "has obtained security, justice, education, a heightened standard of living and of health, great modern industries, 42,000 miles of railroads, ports, highways, and telegraphs, 75,000 miles of irrigation canals to bring water to make the desert bloom, and prevent the famines that used to kill Indians by the millions. For all this she pays not a cent to England except the interest earned by British loans and ordinary commercial investments, and the cost of the small British Army of 60,000 men that in peacetime, along with the Indian Army, has constituted the land forces of British India." Furthermore, Lord Halifax pointed with pride to the fact that all this modern equipment is run by a body of men in which "there are only about 6,000 Britishers to over 1,000,000 Indians."

Throughout the last eighty years, Britain had been associating Indians more and more closely with the government of the country, and Parliament had passed a series of great acts, "to give India, first, representation, and then democratic responsibility. Now that long series has almost completed its appointed task and India stands on the threshold of full self-government." To explain why India has not yet crossed that threshold, Lord Halifax next presented a picture of the Indian scene today, to show that the only barrier is the inability of the major Indian parties and groups to reach agreement among themselves.

In this analysis he put forward a number of arguments

with which readers of this book are already familiar. The Indian National Congress "is a party, predominantly Hindu, comprising something like 2,000,000 members," whose claim to speak for the whole of India "is rejected by other bodies of Indians numbering almost one-half the total population." To substantiate this assertion, he emphasized the Moslem League's claim to speak for India's 90 million Moslems, and the fear of the League that if Congress should gain control of the Government of India, the Moslem minority would be subjected to Hindu domination. Lord Halifax believed that "this is not the time or place to examine the reality or otherwise of Mr. Jinnah's fears . . . they are now a part of Indian politics." Moreover, he considered it inevitable that "the difference of religious faith and the consciousness of a political supremacy that lasted nearly 700 years prevent a minority feeling assured of fair treatment at the hands of the majority." In addition to the Moslems, the Depressed Classes also reject the right of the Congress to speak on their behalf.

In addition to these three major groups in British India, Lord Halifax stressed the existence of "another large political section of India in the shape of the ruling princes. . . . They and their States do not fit easily into the picture of India as the Congress party would like to draw it. Yet the independence of the princes is enshrined in solemn treaties between them and their King-Emperor. To scrap these or any other treaties unilaterally would be to scrap one of the principles for which we went to war with Germany. . . . These four groups—Congress, the Moslem League, the Depressed Classes and the princes—are the four major factors which must combine if India is to be sufficiently united to

assume the rights and duties of full manhood among the nations."

Having thus drawn the picture of the "Indian problem," Lord Halifax proceeded to show how successive British Governments had tried to solve it. He mentioned the Declaration of August 1917, the Act of 1919 by which "partial responsible government was introduced for the provinces; his own announcement, as Viceroy, in 1929 that "it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status," and the seven years of "earnest enquiry and debate" which culminated in the Act of 1935, basis of the present Indian constitution. In his account of India's political history during the critical period from 1919 to 1935, Lord Halifax omitted all mention of the great mass civil disobedience campaigns, the acute economic distress, the limitations imposed on the development of Indian industry, and all the other social and economic issues which had led the Indian nationalist movement to call for complete independence for India. In so doing, he followed the pattern of a great deal of British writing and discussion of the "Indian question"—a pattern which leaves the impression that the most important aspects of that question are the successive "constitutions" bestowed by the British Government on an unappreciative Indian people.

Briefly tracing the course of events since the outbreak of the war, culminating in the Japanese advance to the very gates of India, Lord Halifax concluded his address with an analysis of the British Government's proposals then being submitted to India by Sir Stafford Cripps. The aim of the Government was to provide a definite plan for the satisfac-

tion of India's claim to the free management of her own affairs. The only conditions of the plan were conditions plainly necessary for its own fulfillment, for "if any scheme is to be successful, it must carry the broad agreement both of the minorities and of the rulers of the Indian States." And if the plan should fail to win agreement, it will not be "difficult to decide where the responsibility lay," for the "sincerity of the British Government has been proved." "Freedom for all beneath the British flag has been and will remain the aim of our endeavor. Yesterday, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Ireland: tomorrow I most earnestly pray, India may join their ranks."

All of the points made by Lord Halifax in his survey of Indian development under British rule have already been discussed sufficiently in earlier sections of this book to show that many of the facts regarding British policy in India are open to very different interpretation. There is no need, therefore, to demonstrate again that the language problem is no barrier to Indian unity; that religious antagonism and political organization on religious lines have been fostered by the system of "communal electorates" introduced by the British; that the Indian National Congress is not a Hindu organization; and that the Moslem League cannot rightly claim to speak for India's Moslem community. Nor need we stop to challenge Lord Halifax's remarkably euphemistic description of the financial relationship between India and Britain, or his claim that the Act of 1935 brought India to the threshold of full self-government, when, as we have shown, it in reality confirmed and enlarged the powers of an executive responsible solely to the British Government.

It is important to note, however, that Lord Halifax pic-

tured India's political divisions as based solely on religion, and wholly ignored the existence of groupings on political or economic lines. Also, that he declared that one-quarter of India's population must be automatically and permanently debarred from any democratic progress toward self-government because the British Government was bound by treaties to protect the autocratic power and privileges of the feudal Princes. It is also significant that at no point in his speech did Lord Halifax even mention the contention of the Indian nationalists that only a responsible Indian Government can effectively mobilize the Indian people for defense, or suggest that Indians might be given an immediate share in organizing the defense of their own country.

There is no reason to question the absolute sincerity of Sir Stafford Cripps and the other members of the British War Cabinet in their desire to arrive at some solution of the Indian problem which would make possible the enthusiastic participation of the Indian people in the war. But if we are right in assuming that Lord Halifax's speech represented the British Government's conception of the Indian problem at the time of the Cripps Mission, it is clear that there had been no important change in the British attitude on the question of India's political status, and that therefore the Cripps Mission was destined to fail.

Indian Reaction to the British Proposals

The British plan was discussed with representatives of all the numerous political and religious groups in India, but most of these did not present formal detailed replies. The Hindu Mahasabha, champion of Hindu supremacy, opposed

the "secession" clause as favoring the Moslems, and weakening the power of Hinduism. Although the Indian Princes as a group made no formal reply, it was reported that some of the most powerful Princes were willing to participate in the proposed new Indian union, but that the rulers of the smaller States, who for generations had depended entirely on British support for their continued existence, were fearful of being merged in an All-India Union. On the other hand, the people of the Indian States, through the All-India States Peoples' Conference, adopted a resolution which condemned the British proposals as "utterly harmful and injurious to the cause of freedom, both in the States and in India as a whole." The resolution declared that nothing short of full self-determination, with the right to join a constituent assembly for All-India through elected representatives, could be accepted by the people of the States. The only two political groups which made formal replies, however, were the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League.

Inasmuch as the British Government's proposals appeared to concede the possibility of the creation of a separate Moslem state, it might have been expected that the Moslem League would have enthusiastically endorsed the plan. But Jinnah was quick to see that the secession of the predominantly Moslem provinces would depend upon the League's obtaining a majority in the Provincial Legislatures, which was a very different thing from a guarantee that "Pakistan" would be definitely established. In its final reply, rejecting the British plan, the League "expressed gratification that the possibility of Pakistan is recognized by implication," but objected that if the decision was to be made by the Provincial Legislatures, the Moslems might be out-voted by

a combination of the various other religious and economic groups. The League was equally dissatisfied with a further British proposal that if the majority vote for accession to the new union was less than 60%, the minority would have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult male population. They maintained that such a plebiscite should be confined to the Moslem population only. In other words, the League was not willing to risk attaining "Pakistan" by popular vote, and its reply declared that "unless the principle of Pakistan is unequivocally accepted and the right of Moslems to self-determination conceded by means of machinery which will reflect the true verdict of Moslem India, it is not possible for the Moslem League to accept any proposal or scheme regarding the future."

In view of the extremely favored treatment which the British Government had consistently bestowed upon the Moslem League in the past, and the value which it had always attached to League support in its dealings with the Indian National Congress, it may appear somewhat surprising that the British proposals were, in fact, so formulated that they would presumably not have led to the partition of India along Hindu-Moslem lines. A possible explanation is that the British Government was primarily concerned with securing the good will of the Indian National Congress, and hoped that the nationalist leaders would be sufficiently pleased with this way of handling the Moslem League issue that they would accept the much less palatable aspects of the plan, notably the proposals dealing with the question of Indian defense, and the position of the Indian Princes.

The Indian National Congress, however, rejected the

British plan no less decisively than the Moslem League. The Congress objections centered on two major points. First and foremost was the refusal to establish a Provisional National Government which would be responsible to the elected representatives of the Indian people instead of to the Viceroy, and more particularly, the refusal to grant India any share in the direction of her own defense. The Congress demanded the appointment of an Indian to the position of Defense Minister in the Viceroy's Council, with power to organize and arm the Indian people. This the British Government was unwilling to permit, insisting that it would create confusion and delay, and that full control of all military, naval, and air operations in India must be retained by the British Commander-in-Chief. By the Congress leaders, this was regarded as a definite indication that the Indian people were to remain unarmed, and were to be given neither the opportunity nor the incentive to fight for their freedom.

This was, in fact, the crux of the whole matter. The British Government believed that it was not feasible to relinquish either political or military power in India until after the war. The Indian leaders, on the other hand, maintained that the fundamental factor in the situation was the distrust and dislike of the Indian people for the British Government, and that the people could be aroused to fight for their country only if they were given the same incentive as the Chinese, namely, to fight under their own leaders as free men. In their view, Indian defense could not be entrusted to a British Government which was unwilling to organize or arm the Indian people; which had consistently restricted Indian industrialization, so that India could pro-

duce no airplanes, tanks, heavy guns, or machine tools; which had failed to create an Indian air force, and refused to include Indians in the Empire Pilot Training Scheme. Only a National Government, trusted by the people, could arouse them to take an active part in the war. Nor were the Congress leaders alone in this view. As we have seen, the Indian Liberals under Sapru had demanded the reorganization of the Viceroy's Council to give Indian ministers control over defense and finance, and even the Calcutta *Statesman* (the leading British-owned paper in India) declared: "It is folly so colossal as to be even too sublime, to suggest that a foreign government running the war on the cumbrous British methods, without the active participation of the people, can check the infiltration of the Japanese."

The second major objection of the Congress leaders concerned the post-war provisions of the British plan, notably the exclusion of the people of the Indian States from the proposed Constituent Assembly, and the principle of non-accession which, they believed, would encourage friction among the various Indian groups during the war period when cooperation and united resistance was most essential. The text of the final Congress reply, however, indicates that it was the failure of the plan to provide for any effective participation by India in the United Nations' war effort which was primarily responsible for the Congress rejection of the proposals.

The Reply of the Congress Party

"The working committee have given full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet

with regard to India and the elucidation of them by Sir Stafford Cripps.

"These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India's demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

"The Congress has repeatedly stated ever since the commencement of the war in September, 1939, that the people of India would line themselves up with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked that the necessary conditions to enable them to do so be created. The essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realization of present freedom could light the flame which would illuminate millions of hearts and move them to action.

"At the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee after commencement of war in the Pacific it was stated that: 'Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defense of the country on a national basis and be able to help in furtherance of larger causes that are emerging from the war.'

"The British War Cabinet's new proposals relate principally to the future upon cessation of hostilities. The committee, while recognizing that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is fettered and circumscribed and that certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united national government and the establishment of a democratic State.

"Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that

the people's right of self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements.

"The people of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence, and Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation. The committee recognize that future independence may be implicit in the proposals, but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion.

"The complete ignoring of the 90,000,000 people in the Indian States and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation both of democracy and self-determination. While the representation of an Indian State in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the State have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken.

"Such States may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom. Enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces, it has been stated, would be a likely contingency, would be a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the States as well as of the rest of India.

"Acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces and lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian States merging themselves into an Indian union.

"Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity, and any break of that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federa-

tions, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate.

"Nevertheless, the committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian union against their declared and established will. While recognizing this principle, the committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life.

"Acceptance of this principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which would result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the union consistent with a strong national State.

"The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of union, and thus create friction just when the utmost cooperation and good-will are most needed. This proposal has been made presumably to meet communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead to politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among the different communities and create trouble and divert public attention from vital issues before the country.

"Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis it is the present that counts and even proposals for the future in so far as they affect the present.

"The committee necessarily attached greatest importance to this aspect of the question and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance. For this the present British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and there would appear to be no vital changes in the present structure contemplated.

"It has been made clear that the defense of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defense is a vital subject. During wartime it is all-important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration. To take away defense from the sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and nullity and make it perfectly clear that India is not going to function as a free and independent government during pendency of the war.

"The committee would repeat that an essential, fundamental prerequisite for the assumption of responsibility by the Indian people in the present is their realization as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom.

"What is most wanted is an enthusiastic response of the people which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defense. It is only thus that even in this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanize the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion.

"It is manifest that the present government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defense. It is only the people of India through their popular representatives who can shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom and full responsibility being cast upon them.

"The committee are, therefore, unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet."

There can be no question that the leaders of Congress were anxious to reach a settlement. They made it clear that they would be willing to set aside all proposals for the future, provided that a provisional national government were formed at once. The Congress proposal was that the Viceroy's Executive Council should be composed of represent-

ative Indian leaders who would act as a cabinet with joint responsibility, and that the Viceroy should undertake not to use his extensive powers to over-ride the decisions of such a cabinet. In other words, the Viceroy was to cease to be an absolute ruler and become a "constitutional monarch." This provisional government would have responsibility for organizing the Indian people for defense, while control of the armed forces remained in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, General Wavell. "The crux of the matter," declared Nehru, "is the organization of national defense on a mass basis, but this is only possible under a free national government."

At one point during the negotiations, there seemed to be a good chance that an agreement along these lines would be reached. Both Nehru and Congress President Azad said later that in his early talks with them, Cripps envisaged a national government with the Viceroy as a constitutional head. And the Congress leaders were not alone in thinking that some such arrangement was contemplated. The London *Times*, for example, printed a leading article suggesting that General Wavell's position was to be similar to that of General MacArthur in Australia, i.e., the commander of Allied forces in a free country with a government of its own. At the end, however, Cripps flatly refused to consider the formation of a provisional national government which, he explained in his final radio address, would have meant the "absolute dictatorship of a majority." The Congress reply to this contention was contained in Dr. Azad's final letter to Cripps, which read in part as follows:

"This difficulty is inherent in any scheme for a mixed Cabinet formed to meet an emergency, but there are many ways in which

importance. In none of his statements did Sir Stafford specifically mention the principal Congress objections to the British proposals, namely, that India must have a responsible government if she is to resist effectively, and that the Indian people will fight to preserve their freedom but not to maintain a foreign rule.

The optimistic appraisal offered by Cripps was not borne out by subsequent development in India. The bitter resentment of Indian nationalist leaders at the British refusal to allow them an effective voice in the government was intensified by what they considered to be Cripps' misrepresentation of the situation, and his ignoring of the basic issue of arming the Indian people. In a press interview on April 12, the day after Cripps' departure from India, Nehru declared that "we are not going to embarrass Britain's war effort in India . . . The problem before us now is how . . . to organize our own war effort on our own basis of a free and independent India . . . We are not going to surrender to the invader . . . I want to fight this idea that we must remain passive and cannot do anything . . . I feel definitely that it would be a tragedy if Germany and Japan won this war . . ." Emphasizing that the Congress had never asked for any change in the position of the British Commander-in-Chief, Nehru explained that his conception of the defense of India had differed from that of the British Government's. "I wanted to raise an army of millions of citizens so that even if, unfortunately, the Army failed, the citizens' army would not surrender . . . Think of what it would mean for the world situation if a National Indian Government were to declare today that it would arm the Indian people. We perhaps would not have the best modern arms, airplanes,

and tanks, but we would give our people rifles, which we could manufacture."

In a subsequent interview, Nehru flatly denied that the situation in India had been improved by the Cripps Mission. "If Cripps thinks that the position of India has been improved by his visit, he is grievously mistaken," said Nehru. "The gulf is greater today than before. It is true that events are compelling us to think what we should do to meet problems, but whatever we may do . . . we can only cooperate as free men and a free national government with others who acknowledge us as such. Sir Stafford has said that we shirk responsibility. That is a curious charge when the responsibility we sought was denied us. Certainly we are not excited with the heavy responsibility of running canteens and stationery shops that we were told we could have for the Defense Minister."

In these statements, Nehru touched on the real and critical danger in the situation—the fact that the Indian people were totally unarmed and had been denied all opportunity for military training. Though the Indian Army had been expanded from about 200,000 to over one million troops since 1939, it was still a British-controlled, British-officered military machine, recruited largely from the special "martial races" and in no way representative of the Indian people or of Indian nationalist sentiment. The ban on Volunteer Defense Units, imposed in September 1940, had not been lifted, and the Indian people were still forbidden to possess arms of any kind. British colonial policy had always been based on the theory that colonies should be defended without the aid of the native population as a whole. The battle of Malaya had been fought without the Malayans; the battle

of Burma without the Burmese; and it appeared that despite the bitter lessons of these two campaigns, the British Government intended to fight the battle of India without the Indians. It was the Indian people's total lack of the means for armed resistance which strengthened Gandhi's hand when he urged his disastrous policy of "non-violent non-cooperation" as the only available method for resisting Japan, and correspondingly weakened Nehru's position when he demanded guerrilla warfare and widespread popular resistance.

Nehru and at least a minority of the Congress Working Committee clearly recognized that "non-violent non-cooperation" would be utterly futile if applied against the ruthless armed forces of Japan, whereas a people's army, millions strong, trained in guerrilla warfare and armed with rifles and other light weapons, could provide invaluable support to the regular Indian and British troops. Yet on May 2, 1942, the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution, introduced by Patel on Gandhi's behalf, which, while confirming India's determination to resist invasion, also indicated that the people would be compelled to rely on the method of "non-violent non-cooperation" because they were denied any other weapons. After taking cognizance of the advance of the Japanese toward the frontiers of India, the resolution stated in part as follows:

"The working committee of the All-India Congress party repudiates the idea that freedom can come through interference by any foreign nation. . . . If invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation, as the British Government has prevented the organization of national defense by the people in any other way.

The Committee therefore expects the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them.

"We may not bend the knee to an aggressor, nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favors, nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields, we must refuse to give them up, even if we have to die in the effort to resist. In places in which the British and the invading forces are fighting, our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not putting any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating non-cooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude, the British do not need help from us beyond non-interference. . . .

"While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she repeatedly has declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as well as to imperialism. If India were free, she should have determined her own policy and might have kept out of war, although her sympathies in any event would be with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join in the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defense would have been organized under popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority."

It is a matter of historic importance that this resolution was adopted only by the narrow margin of 7 to 4, with President Azad abstaining. Rajagopalacharia, who had already demanded the immediate arming of the Indian people, had resigned from the Working Committee after the rejection of his resolution proposing a settlement with the Moslem League (see p. 107) and therefore could not vote. Nehru had made a strenuous effort to get the resolution withdrawn, in order to leave the way open for further negotiations with

the British on the question of organizing popular resistance, but eventually voted for it out of deference to Gandhi. Azad was known to favor popular resistance, but abstained from voting rather than break directly with Gandhi. Thus if Rajagopalacharia had not resigned, and if Nehru and Azad had been able to offer any practical alternative, the vote might have been 7 to 6 against the resolution. It seems clear, therefore, that the British Government's reluctance to arm the Indian people and to give Indian nationalists a share in organizing Indian defense, played directly into the hands of the Gandhi-supporters in the Working Committee, and enabled Gandhi once more to secure the adoption of his defeatist policy of "non-violent" resistance.

But the May 2nd resolution, passed by such a precarious margin in the Congress Working Committee, had still to be approved by the All-India Congress Committee before it became the official policy of the Congress. And in that Committee, where the left-wing groups were more strongly represented, a policy of "non-violence" against Japanese aggression was likely to meet with powerful opposition. Moreover, there was growing evidence that the rank and file of the Congress was dissatisfied with the negative stand of the Congress leadership. Many members of Congress were also members of the All-India Peasants Conference (Kisan Sabha), the strongest peasant organization in India, with a membership of some 800,000. The Kisan Sabha, founded in 1936, had always strongly supported the Congress demands for political independence and agrarian reform. But when the Congress Executive accepted the non-violence resolution, the Kisan Sabha passed a resolution stating that "the principle of non-violent non-cooperation

is utterly futile and a clear invitation to the Japanese to seize India." The resolution went on to declare that it was the duty of every Indian to defend India against Japanese aggression.

Gandhi was thus confronted with the possibility that his leadership would be seriously challenged by the Congress as a whole. He had also to take into account new Japanese efforts to appeal to the Indian nationalists. Early in June, a Japanese-sponsored "Indian Independence Conference" met in Bangkok, attended by Indian political exiles who had formerly fled to Japan or to other areas in Southeast Asia now under Japanese control, and also by diplomatic representatives from Japan, Germany, and Italy. These Axis delegates assured the Conference that all that the Axis wished was to give India her "freedom." Premier Tojo of Japan sent a message stating that Japan "is quite willing to extend the fullest support and aid to the independence campaign," and the Indian representatives were repeatedly told that India's only hope lay in the immediate severance of every relation with Great Britain.

Faced with this double threat of a possible Congress revolt against his pacifist doctrines and the blasts of Axis propaganda emanating from Bangkok, Gandhi diverted attention from his non-violence policy by coming out with a demand that Britain immediately recognize Indian independence, and that "political power be completely transferred to an Indian Provisional Government composed of representatives of the Congress, the Moslem League, and the Indian States." Such a Government, said Gandhi, would at once enter into a treaty with the United Nations for defensive operations against Japanese aggression. Gandhi also modi-

fied his initial statement that British and American troops should immediately "quit India" by declaring that a free India would welcome the British and Americans as allies against Japan, and that "foreign troops are necessary for the defense of India."

On June 15, Gandhi stated in a press interview that "I want India to oppose Japan to a man. If India were free, she would do it. In twenty-four hours her mind would be changed." And on June 20, he wrote Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek that if India were given independence, he favored resistance to Japan and all other Axis Powers and all possible aid to China. Nehru came out strongly in support of Gandhi's demand for the immediate concession of political power to a provisional National Indian Government, and declared emphatically that it was fantastic to expect Indian freedom from Japan or any other power fighting on the side of the Japanese. "The defense of India," said Nehru, "is primarily an Indian concern. A free India would ally herself with those who would help her in such defense. Japan and the group of powers with her are reactionary and represent a social philosophy that is exceedingly wrong and dangerous."

For the moment it seemed that Gandhi had actually modified his pacifist position to a certain extent, on condition that an Indian Government be given real power. Unfortunately, however, this appears to have been merely one of his usual diversionist tactics adopted to meet the growing opposition to his leadership. For on July 4, writing in his weekly newspaper, *Harijan*, Gandhi reverted to his insistence on a non-violence policy, even if India were given full political power. Anglo-American troops would be welcome

in India to fight Japan and aid China, he declared, provided that they did not exercise any authority over the Indian people and that India was not required to pay the cost of their maintenance. India should be free from all financial obligation to Great Britain, all taxation except that imposed by a free Indian Government should be abolished, and the "deadweight of an all-powerful authority" should be lifted. Then, said Gandhi, India should "begin a new chapter in her national life in which non-violence is the predominant factor," and this non-violence would be expressed by India's having Ambassadors to Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo, "not to beg for peace but to show them the futility of war." In this statement, Gandhi made clear his unaltered opposition to the efforts of Nehru and other Congress leaders to arouse the Indian people to fight against Japan. And by apparently ruling out the possibility of Indian cooperation in the anti-Axis war effort, he gave the British Government a plausible excuse for its refusal to grant Indian leaders any power to control the organization of Indian defense.

Once more, Gandhi had proved himself a paralyzing and disrupting influence, and the aspirations of that large section of Indian nationalist opinion which wanted to join the fight against fascist aggression as free men, under leaders of their own choosing, were dealt a further serious blow by a new move on the part of the British Government. On July 3, a reorganization of the Government of India was announced which totally ignored the basic nationalist demand for a responsible Indian Government capable of mobilizing the Indian people. The Viceroy's Executive Council was enlarged from twelve to fifteen members, with eleven non-official Indians, one non-official British member as Minis-

ter of War Transport, and three British officials including General Wavell as Commander-in-Chief. The Ministry of Defense was given to Sir Firoz Khan Noon, formerly Indian High Commissioner in London, but it was understood that the Defense Minister would be subordinate to General Wavell in all matters. Dr. Ambedkar, bitter opponent of the Congress, was given the Labor portfolio and two Indians were appointed to sit with the British War Cabinet: Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, a conservative Hindu leader from Madras who was already a member of the Viceroy's Council, and the Maharajah Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, representing the Indian Princes. Not a single new appointee was a Congress member and all were known for their "moderate" views.

By reorganizing the Government of India in this way, the British authorities indicated clearly their belief that India can be defended without the help of the Indian people as a whole. They chose to ignore completely the one political party that possessed a nation-wide mass following and an organization capable of reaching the Indian people, not only through the thousands of local party workers, but also through the close relations of the Congress with peasant and workers' parties, trade unions, and people's organizations in the Indian States. This action can be viewed not only as a direct "punishment" of the Congress for its refusal to accept the "all or nothing" proposals submitted by Sir Stafford Cripps, but also as indicating Britain's willingness to take advantage of the confusion within Indian nationalist ranks which the British Government itself helped to create, not without the aid of Gandhi.

Thus, with a concerted German and Japanese drive on

India looming as an imminent possibility—a drive which would threaten not only Asia and the Middle East but the entire war effort of the United Nations—the political and military situation in India in July 1942 was left even more confused and unstable than at the outbreak of the war in September 1939. Though on the one hand, a large section of the politically conscious Indian people were willing and eager to resist an Axis attack on their country, the majority of the impoverished Indian peasantry had still to be aroused out of their sullen hatred of the British, and convinced that they had a stake in the war and were not being asked to fight merely to preserve one foreign rule against another. The genuinely anti-fascist leaders of India were in a dilemma. With them, as Nehru said, it was not a question of embarrassing the British and the Allied nations. They were fully aware that any immediate revolutionary action against Britain would play directly into the hands of Japan and Germany. But they were equally convinced that to accept the British proposals, and just sit passively by, leaving the defense of India to British and American troops, would have the same result. In their view, there was only one possible way for India not only to defend herself but to contribute positively to the defeat of the Axis powers. This was the formation of a responsible Indian Government, trusted by the people, with the power to organize and arm them. Nothing less would suffice to enlist the whole-hearted participation of India's vast manpower in the United Nations war effort. The British rulers of India, on the other hand, were still confident that despite the disastrous experience of the Malaya and Burma campaigns, they could defend India by themselves with American aid, and that therefore

political concessions to the Indian people were not a matter of immediate military necessity. Consequently, they were content to have the Indian people remain passive and unarmed, and to administer a stinging rebuke to the Congress for its insistence on the granting of political power to a representative Indian Government.

A complete impasse appeared to have been reached, and the Indian political situation became even more critical following the adoption of a new resolution by the Congress Working Committee on July 15th. This resolution constituted an extremely important change from the position taken by the Working Committee on May 2nd, but much of the advance publicity and comment concerning it which appeared in the British and American press was so bitter and distorted as to obscure its real meaning. The full text of the resolution is therefore included here to provide the basis for a dispassionate analysis.

"Events happening from day to day, and the experience which the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination at its best is evil in itself and a continuing injury to a subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interests of India but also for the safety of the world, for ending nazism, fascism, militarism, and other forms of imperialism and aggression of one nation over another.

"Ever since the outbreak of the World War the Congress has studiously pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its *Satyagraha* [civil disobedience] ineffective, it deliberately gave it symbolic character in the hope that the

policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution toward the realization of human freedom throughout the world which is in danger of being crushed. It also was hoped negatively that nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's hold on India.

"These hopes, however, were dashed to pieces: the abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude to India and that the British hold on India would be in no way relaxed. In their negotiations with Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum consistent with the national demand, but it was of no avail. This frustration resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms.

"The Working Committee views this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.

"The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain to good-will and make India a willing partner in the joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India can feel the glow of freedom.

"The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this is made impossible by the presence of a foreign power, and only after ending foreign domination and intervention can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them

on a mutual and agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attracting the attention of and influencing British power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history the realization will come home that the princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and the propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields, factories, and elsewhere to whom essentially power and authority must belong.

"On the withdrawal of British rule from India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government representative of all the important sections of the people of India which will later evolve a scheme whereby a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. The representatives of free India and Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations, for the cooperation of the two countries as allies, and for the common cause in meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with peoples of united will and strength behind it.

"In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatever to embarrass Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the war or in any way to encourage aggression on India, or, of course, pressure on China, by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor is it the intention of Congress to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied powers.

"The Congress, therefore, is agreeable to the stationing of armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China. The proposal for the withdrawal of British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of Britons from India and certainly not those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such a withdrawal takes place with good-will it would result in the establishing of a stable

provisional government in India and in cooperation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and in helping China.

"The Congress realizes that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom, and more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

"While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve its national purpose it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid as far as possible any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposals herein made not only in the interests of India but also those of freedom, of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their allegiance.

"Should, however, this appeal fail the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving progressive deterioration in the situation and the weakening of India's will-power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered since 1920 when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy and for the vindication of its political rights and liberties. Such a widespread struggle would be inevitably under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi.

"As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee will refer them to the All-India Congress Committee for final decision."

One significant feature of this resolution was its date. When the Working Committee adopted the May 2nd "non-violent non-cooperation" resolution, it was announced that

the All-India Congress Committee would meet early in July to consider its ratification. But by the time July came around, opposition to the stand taken in the May 2nd resolution had apparently become so strong in the Congress rank and file that Gandhi felt it necessary to modify his position and prepare a new statement for submission to a postponed meeting of the All-India Congress Committee on August 7th. Gandhi thus followed his usual tactics of forestalling a serious challenge to his leadership by adopting a new position.

The new resolution, however, appeared to have been a victory for Gandhi only in the sense that he thereby avoided the possibility of a serious Congress revolt against his leadership. For in it we see the complete disappearance of the idea that "non-violent non-cooperation" was the only method by which the Indian people could defend themselves against aggression. This removal of the "defeatist" wording which marked the May 2nd resolution, and which had aroused such acute controversy both within and outside the Congress membership, cannot be considered as anything but a definite defeat for Gandhi, and a corresponding strengthening of the non-Gandhi forces in Congress.

At the same time, however, there was a shift in emphasis in the July 15th resolution as compared with the Congress reply to the Cripps proposals. In the reply to the Cripps offer, the main stress had been placed on the need for organizing and arming the Indian people for defense, with the corollary that only a responsible Indian Government could achieve this task. But in the July resolution, the emphasis was on complete and immediate independence, following which India would willingly cooperate with the United Nations "in resisting aggression and helping China." Though in sub-

stance both statements carried the same meaning, the shift in emphasis from defense to the immediate termination of British rule gave the British and American press an excuse for a bitter and unjustifiable attack on the Congress.

Once again, the critics of Congress advanced the well-worn thesis that all the Moslems of India are "resolutely opposed to the Hindu-dominated Congress" and that to acquiesce in the Congress demands would be to plunge India into civil chaos and military paralysis. Once again, the baseless assertion that the Moslem League spoke for all Moslem India was brought into play, while the Congress leaders were accused of being more concerned with strengthening their own power than with winning Indian independence. Ignoring the existence of the many Moslem organizations, workers' and peasants' parties, trade unions, and other groups which had staunchly supported the Congress program, press despatches from London harped on the theme that if Congress should attempt to form a government, "the country would fly apart, whole provinces would secede, the army would disband, and civil authority would be paralyzed." One such despatch reported that in "responsible quarters" in London, "the high-sounding phrases in the resolution about the desire of Congress not to embarrass the United Nations' war effort were dismissed as 'buncombe.'" These same sources described the Congress as controlled by a few wealthy industrialists, and as wholly unrepresentative of "millions of Moslems, the trade unions, the Communists, and other left-wing groups, or the provinces governed by the Indian princes," a statement which readers of this book will readily recognize as being at marked variance with the facts.

The resolution was also denounced in London as a

"scarcely veiled threat of a sell-out to Japan." Yet none of the news reports from India, much less the text of the resolution itself, gave the slightest indication that the Congress leaders and their followers were anything but unanimously anti-fascist and determined to resist aggression. The July statement specifically declared that Congress wished "to enable India to resist aggression effectively," and had "no desire whatsoever to embarrass Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the war." Throughout the resolution the major theme was the desire to bring the Indian people fully into the war effort before it was too late. And this was no abstract, theoretical ideal. For months Congress district leaders had been working intensively in villages and towns throughout India, organizing a large-scale program of "self-protection and self-sufficiency" which involved training the people in air raid precautions, urging them to make their communities more self-sufficient in food in the event of a disruption of the transport system, and other forms of social work designed to prepare the people to meet any emergency. This program was naturally limited in scope and effectiveness by the lack of cooperation from the British authorities, but it was concrete proof of the Congress desire to teach the Indian people not only the necessity but the methods of withstanding the threatened attack.

To many students of Indian affairs, the wording of the July resolution was remarkable for its decidedly non-Gandhi flavor. It appeared, in fact, that the statement that if the Congress should finally be compelled to launch a struggle against British rule, such a struggle "would be inevitably under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi," might have been included as a concession to Gandhi in an effort to pre-

serve the unity of the Indian nationalist movement. The British authorities, however, for the most part took the stand that the resolution was primarily Gandhi's work, and that he had deliberately set out to inflame Indian opinion, enhance his own personal power, and hamstring British efforts to oppose a Japanese invasion. Even if this view of the matter were correct, the British had only themselves to blame. First, because they had so often in the past strengthened Gandhi's political power for their own purposes. Second, because their refusal to allow the arming of the Indian people under their own leaders for defense, as demanded by Nehru at the time of the Cripps mission, left the Congress no other alternative but to accept Gandhi's "non-violence" policy. Gandhi's past record of political maneuvering, and his adamant adherence to "non-violence" even in the face of fascist aggression fully justified the charge that he was a major obstacle to a quick victory over the Axis powers. But the July 15th resolution made it clear that Gandhi's defeatist views were not those of the Congress as a whole; that the British Government was not justified in blaming the impasse on Gandhi; that the British might once more be accused of using Gandhi as an excuse for refusing the just demands of the Indian people; and that with the support of a Congress leadership whose major concern is that India should play her full part in the world struggle for freedom and democracy, the British Government had it in its power to overcome the obstacle of Gandhi's pacifist doctrines.

As the military situation became increasingly critical, it was the fervent hope of the peoples of the United Nations that British statesmen might still alter their attitude on India's role in the war, decide to "by-pass" Gandhi and reopen nego-

tiations with the genuinely anti-fascist leaders of the Indian people, and thereby maintain a solid political and military front against the double-barrelled Axis drive to isolate Asia and Europe from the outside world. As the All-India Congress Committee was preparing to meet on August 7, there was every reason to believe that such a move on the part of the British would meet with success.

One more aspect of the Indian political crisis which deserves brief mention was the fact that, in the words of Congress President Azad, the Congress demand for immediate freedom for India was addressed to the United States as well as other countries. "America's entry into the war," said Azad, "has increased its responsibility toward all the democratic-minded peoples of the world." And he went on to declare that Indians look to the United States to influence Great Britain, and that inasmuch as Britain is dividing responsibility for India's defense with the United States, Indians must more and more address the United States as well as Britain. Even more emphatically, the Delhi *National Call*—a Congress newspaper—declared that "we appeal to President Roosevelt and through him to the freedom-loving people of America in the name of democracy to intercede and effect a settlement before it is too late." There was also evidence that a last minute compromise between the Congress and the British Government was still within the realm of possibility. Mr. A. T. Steele, reporting from New Delhi on July 21, stated that he had not talked with "any Indian nationalist or British official who considers the door completely closed to a settlement by negotiation. If the British could offer a genuine national government selected by agreement between the British and all parties, with Indians in possession of real

powers in key departments and with true independence promised as a post-war goal, they would have many willing listeners in Congress ranks."

Most of the American press comment was severely critical of Azad's appeal for American intervention, but it was nevertheless clear that the problem of India had definitely ceased being solely an Indian or a British problem. It had become a world problem of far too critical a nature for the American Government to remain "neutral."

EPILOGUE



No study of the Indian problem in 1942, against the background of a titanic struggle between the forces of human freedom and fascist tyranny, would be complete without at least some discussion of the character of the war and of the peace for which it is being fought. This war is very different from the first "world war" of 1914-18. Then India and the other colonial areas in Asia were considered merely as sources of manpower, money, and supplies for their western rulers. Freedom and progress for the colonial peoples of the world had no place in the war or peace aims of the Allied nations. But the present fight against fascism is truly a world war,—a people's war in which the United Nations stand pledged to fight for the liberty, peace, prosperity, and progress of all the peoples of the world. In the eloquent words of Vice-President Wallace, this war is a "fight between a slave world and a free world," an epic milestone in the march toward "even fuller freedom than the most fortunate peoples of the earth have hitherto enjoyed." Rebuking those who talk of the coming "American Century," Wallace declared that the century which will come of this war can be and must be the "people's century," in which there will be neither military nor economic im-

perialism, and "no nation will have the God-given right to exploit other nations." "The peace," he said, "must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China, and Latin America—not merely in the United Nations, but also in Germany and Italy and Japan."

In equally eloquent and soul-stirring words, Sumner Welles declared in his Memorial Day address on May 30, 1942, that "this is in very truth a people's war. It is a war which cannot be won until the fundamental rights of the peoples of the earth are secured. In no other manner can a true peace be achieved." Welles went on to urge that "if this war is in fact a war for the liberation of peoples, it must assure the sovereign equality of peoples throughout the world, as well as in the world of the Americas. Our victory must bring in its train the liberation of all peoples. Discrimination between peoples because of their race, creed, or color must be abolished. The age of imperialism is ended. The right of a people to their freedom must be recognized. . . . The principles of the Atlantic Charter must be guaranteed to the world as a whole—in all oceans and in all continents."

Throughout these and other notable statements by America's leaders runs the common thread of a determination that this war shall not have been fought in vain; that the peace which follows the ultimate victory of the United Nations shall be a world-wide, just, and enduring peace in which the people of every country will have the opportunity to enjoy a better life. Universal education, industrial progress, experience in the art of self-government, a higher standard of living, not just for the privileged few, but for

all the nations and people of the world,—these are some of the goals which must be achieved if the four freedoms enunciated by President Roosevelt are to be translated into reality. The advance of modern science has made it technologically possible for the world to produce ample food and goods for all. The task of post-war statesmanship must be to create an economic structure which can distribute these goods fairly among all nations and give their people the means with which to buy them.

But though the foundations of an enduring peace in the economic sphere must of necessity wait upon the conclusion of the war, in the political and social sphere they can and must be established now. For if the peace which follows this war is to crush forever the seeds of tyranny, slavery, and domination by force; the myth of superior and inferior races and peoples; and the exploitation of the many for the benefit of the few; then it must be a peace which all the people of the world have shared in winning, and for which they feel a definite sense of responsibility. Otherwise, the end of the war may leave the colonial peoples of the world feeling that they have had no share in the victory, and are to have no voice in building the new political and economic order. If these millions are left embittered, impoverished, and ignored, while their destinies are decided for them in the council chambers of the mighty, then the prospects of an enduring peace will be poor indeed. But if they are treated as full and equal partners in the war, and given definite duties and responsibilities in the common struggle against the Axis, the very process of fighting the war will constitute the best possible training ground for their post-war progress in self-government and international cooperation. Educa-

tion in the meaning and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic world should not be postponed until after the war is over; it is as essential for victory over the forces of fascist domination as it is for the establishment of lasting peace.

These arguments apply with special pertinence to the Indian people, whose success or failure to achieve unity, freedom, and social progress cannot but have a profound effect upon the whole future of Asia. India presents a far more serious challenge to the leaders of the United Nations than does China. Despite the cruel hardships and devastation wrought by more than five years of war, and despite the internal rifts and dissensions still evident in her political life, China has made great strides toward the attainment of genuine national unity. Above all, the Chinese people are fighting for their national freedom under their own leaders, and millions of Chinese, particularly in the guerrilla areas in North and Central China, have for the first time gained practical experience in democratic forms of government. But for the Indian people as a whole, the war has brought no such political developments. They have been given no opportunity to forge their national unity in a common struggle, no training in the art of democratic government, and no sense of responsibility for achieving victory. To them, proclamations about human liberty and progress can be little but empty and meaningless phrases, so long as their government and their armed forces remain entirely foreign-controlled.

In carrying out the global strategy of concentrating their main forces for an effective blow against Hitler on the European front, while simultaneously aiding China to withstand the Japanese offensive, defending India, and laying the

ground for an ultimate counter-offensive to drive Japan out of the conquered areas, the United Nations must make the utmost use of every available resource. It is unquestionably true that India cannot raise in a few crucial months a modern military force capable of fighting on anything like equal terms alongside of British and American troops. But it is equally true that the Indian people can be organized into a powerful auxiliary force whose sturdy resistance might conceivably turn the tide in favor of the United Nations. The arming of the people of Madrid and their defense of their city can be cited as a classic example of what a militarily untrained community of men and women are capable of, if they are given motive, means, and the opportunity to fight for their homes and freedom. Is it possible that the leaders of the United Nations are so certain of ultimate victory against the Axis that they can afford to ignore this? Is it possible that they hold the vast potential forces available in Asia so lightly that they do not deem worth while the efforts and expense required to organize them?

It cannot but be recognized that thus far it has been China's heroic and effective resistance which has preserved the loyalty of the Asiatic peoples to the cause of the United Nations and served to combat the Japanese slogan of Asia for the Asiatics, even though millions of the people of Asia are still largely apathetic toward the war. Equally certain is the fact that active participation in the war by the Indian people would have political effects of immense military value throughout the colonial world in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Furthermore, the job of ejecting Japan from the conquered areas in Southeast Asia with the least amount of sacrifice in human lives, and the job of retaining the

friendship and support of the Asiatic peoples in a post-war world, would be enormously facilitated by enlisting the immediate cooperation of the colonial peoples.

But the United Nations, and particularly America and Britain, have yet to offer specific proof that a victory over the Axis would mean freedom for these peoples and not merely a change of masters. No Pacific or Asiatic Charter has yet been announced to parallel the Atlantic Charter. The "American Century" advocates in the United States continue to talk in terms of the balance of power and who shall control what areas in the Far East. And their "British Century" counterparts in London still deny the Indian people any share in the control of their government, and refuse to permit the organization of an Indian popular defense force.

It bodes ill for the achievement of a "people's peace" that nearly 400,000,000 citizens of the world should have no share in the winning of that peace, no incentive for making it a durable one, and no political education in the difficult tasks of self-government. Obviously, the tremendous obstacles of illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty which obstruct India's progress toward political and economic freedom will take many years to overcome. But the very process of participating in the war effort, of being trusted with responsibility for organizing popular resistance, would in itself do much to prepare the Indian people for the role they must play if the United Nations are in fact to build a world based on the principles of equal opportunity and freedom for all.

In meeting the challenge posed by India, the people of America have a great duty and responsibility to fulfill. Eighty years ago, Abraham Lincoln pledged the American

people to the sacred cause that "government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." Today, Americans are fighting on every continent and ocean that this principle may not only be preserved at home, but extended to every people in the world. American statesmen have taken the lead in proclaiming the objectives for which this war is being waged,—the objectives of liberty, equality, and progress for which this country was founded, and for which its citizens have fought for more than 150 years. Once and for all, the isolationist illusions of the American people have been destroyed. Lincoln declared that no nation can live half slave, half free. Today, we have recognized this truth in its larger setting,—that no country can survive in a world half slave, half free. The American people will have made a contribution of inestimable value, not only to the victory of the United Nations, but to the ultimate attainment of a free, prosperous, and peaceful world, if they assume leadership in implementing the principles enunciated by the more far-seeing and progressive leaders of their country.

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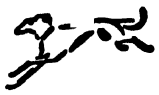
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